

PR 3605
M9A65

PR
3605
M9A65
1828



Oxberry's Edition.

KNOW YOUR OWN MIND.

A COMEDY ;

IN FIVE ACTS,

By Arthur Murphy.

WITH PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE ONLY EDITION EXISTING WHICH IS FAITHFULLY

MARKED WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS,

AND STAGE DIRECTIONS,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatres Royal.

By W. OXBERRY, *Comedian.*

BOSTON :

PUBLISHED BY WELLS AND LILLY—COURT-STREET :

A. T. GOODRICH & CO.—NEW-YORK.

1823.

PR3605
M9 A65
1823

142568

9



uncat.
A. M. P., Feb. 2, 1920.

Remarks.

KNOW YOUR OWN MIND.

IT is no easy matter to adjust the claims to originality between this comedy and the "*School for Scandal*." Murphy asserts that he had written *Know your own Mind* many years prior to its production; and thus much is certain; the comedy was for a long time in the possession of Sheridan before he brought out his play on the boards of his own theatre. This fact, though not conclusive, is at least favourable to the claims of Murphy, coupled as it is with the singular circumstance, that Sheridan, neither before nor after, wrote any thing at all comparable to the *School for Scandal*. The "*Duenna*" and the "*Rivals*," the best of his remaining productions, are yet far inferior to this celebrated comedy, and, if report speaks truly, Sheridan himself was not slow in acknowledging the fact. The striking likeness between the two pieces seems to be a result beyond all the possible calculations of chance, the similarity is extended to so many points, to individual characters as well as to the general substance. Yet with all this circumstantial evidence on one side, and I have purposely placed it in its strongest colours, it is scarcely possible to come to a decision. This similarity in the two comedies might perhaps be occasioned by both authors going to the

same storehouse for their materials; and, in truth, the germ of either play is to be found in the miscellaneous prose works of the elder Colman; that Sheridan looked into this latter author is beyond a question, for he has borrowed two or three very brilliant ideas from Colman, though he has clothed them in his own terse and peculiar language. Critical justice has seldom been done to "*Know your own Mind*;" because it is inferior to its brilliant prototype, the general voice has been too apt to condemn it as worth nothing; whereas, it is by far the best comedy that Murphy ever wrote, and this is no slight praise, considering that he is the author of "*All in the Wrong*," and "*The Way to Keep Him*." The dialogue is less epigrammatic than the dialogue of "*The School for Scandal*," but what it loses thereby in pungency, it gains on the other hand in its approximation to the language of common life; the characters speak the real dialect of the world, or at least only differ from it by that superior degree of polish and correctness which is requisite for the purposes of the drama; it is that slight colouring beyond nature which the painter is compelled to give to his portrait for effect, and which, however false in itself, is yet true in its results.

In regard to plot, this comedy is perhaps the first of the modern English Drama, notwithstanding the excellent screen-scene in the *School for Scandal*, which, with all its brilliance, is liable to one decided objection. The screen is placed before the window, because Joseph's "opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of so curious a temper," and yet it is between the screen and this very window that Joseph places Lady Teazle, directly exposed to the prying eyes of the maiden lady with the "curious temper;" if it were an object of so much importance that the old maid should not see Sir Peter's wife in the room, as a visitor, of

how much more importance was it, that she should not see her in that awkward position, concealed behind a screen ! It would be difficult to point out a blunder of this magnitude in Murphy's comedy.

"*Know your own Mind*" has besides a decided advantage in its female characters. Lady Bell and Lady Jane are, even separately considered, far superior to Maria. It has indeed been asserted, that this character was infinitely more prominent in the author's original sketch, but that he reduced it to its present state, because the actress into whose hands the part must inevitably fall, was unequal to its performance. This may be true, but it has inflicted an incurable wound upon Sheridan's brilliant work. As the matter now stands, Charles and Maria never come in contact through the whole progress of the piece, and the character of Maria is, in consequence, flung completely into shadow ; she is even inferior to the mild and tender Neville, who yet with Murphy is but a sort of relief to the broad caricature and brilliant colouring of Millamour, Dashwould and Lady Bell.

There is some little falling off from propriety towards the end of this diverting piece ; the characters depart somewhat from their individual natures to bring about a pleasant catastrophe, and are all rather too abrupt in their reforms. This, however, is always the most difficult part of an author's task, and perhaps no dramatist excepting Shakspeare has ever fairly conquered it. When at the conclusion of the "*Merry Wives of Windsor*," Master Brook lays aside his jealousy, and Falstaff gives up his schemes upon the women, their real dispositions are by no means changed ; the men are precisely the same as at the outset of the piece, though they are acted upon by circumstances. But this is by no means the case with Murphy ; Sir Harry rises

above himself; Dashwould becomes a moralist; and Millamour is suddenly reformed into steadiness: all that are made happy are made so at the expense of their consistency; Malvil and Mrs. Bromley, who are dismissed to contempt and disappointment, are the only characters that end as they began, and preserve their colours unchanged and unchangeable to the last.

Prologue.

SPOKEN BY MR. LEWIS.

THROUGH the wide tracts of life, in every trade,
 What numbers toil with faculties decay'd !
 Worn out, yet eager—in the race they run,
 And never learn—when proper to have done.

What need of proofs? Ev'n authors do the same,
 And rather than desist, decline in fame.
 Like gamesters thrive at first; then bolder grow,
 And hazard all upon one desp'rate throw.

This truth to feel, perhaps too much inclin'd,
 Our Bard, long hackney'd, trembles there behind,
 Lest he should prove—another *vanish'd mind*.
 Long has this play lain hid, suppress'd by fears,
 Beyond the Critics rule, *above nine years* !
 And now he comes,—'tis the plain simple truth,
 This night to answer for his sins of youth.

The piece, you'll say, should now perfection bear;
 But who can reach it after all his care?

He paints no monsters for ill-judg'd applause :
 Life he has view'd, and from that source he draws.
 Here are no fools, the Drama's standing jest !
 And *Welchmen* now, *North Britons* too may rest.
Hibernia's sons shall here excite no wonder,
 Nor shall *St. Patrick* blush to hear them blunder.
 By other arts he strives your taste to hit,
 Some plot, some character—he hopes, some wit.
 And if this piece should please you like the past,
 Ye Brother Bards ! forgive him :—'tis his last.

Lost are the friends who lent their aid before ;
Roscius retires, and *Barry* is no more.

Harmonious *Barry* ! with what varied art
 His grief, rage, tenderness assail'd the heart ?
 Of plaintive *Otway* now no more the boast !
 And *Shakspeare* grieves for his *Othello* lost.
 Oft on this spot the tuneful swan expir'd,
 Warbling his grief ;—you listen, and admir'd.
 'Twas then but fancied woe ; now ev'ry Muse,
 Her lyre unstrung, with tears his urn bedews.

From this night's scenes e'en Woodward too is fled,
 Stretch'd by pale sickness on his languid bed,
 Nor can *Thalia* raise her favourite's* head.

* Woodward was to have played the part of Dashwould ; in his last illness he lamented to the author, that he could not close his theatrical life with that character ; he died a few weeks after the play appeared ; for years the life of the comic scene, and in his end regretted as a worthy and an honest man.

For them our Author lov'd the tale to weave ;
 He feels their loss ; and now he takes his leave ;
 Sees new performers in succession spring,
 And hopes new poets will expand their wing.
 Beneath your smile his leaf of laurel grew ;
 Gladly he'd keep it,—for 'twas giv'n by you.
 But if too weak his art, if wild his aim,
 On favours past he builds no idle claim :
 To you once more he boldly dares to trust ;
Hear, and pronounce—he *knows* you will be just.

Time of Representation.

The time this piece takes in representation, is three hours. The half-price commences at nine o'clock.

Stage Directions.

By R.H.	-----	is meant	-----	Right Hand.
L.H.	-----		-----	Left Hand.
S.E.	-----		-----	Second Entrance.
U.E.	-----		-----	Upper Entrance.
M.D.	-----		-----	Middle Door.
D.F.	-----		-----	Door in Flat.
R.H.D.	-----		-----	Right Hand Door.
L.H.D.	-----		-----	Left Hand Door.

Costume.

MILLAMOUR.

Brown coat, white waistcoat, and breeches.

DASHWOULD.

Blue coat,—ibid.

SIR H. LOVEWIT.

Green coat,—ibid.

CAPTAIN BYGROVE.

Blue regimental coat,—ibid.

MALVIL.

Black coat, white waistcoat, and black breeches.

SIR J. MILLAMOUR.

Black velvet coat and breeches, and embroidered waistcoat.

BYGROVE.

Middle-aged gentleman's suit.

CHARLES.

Livery white jacket, white waistcoat, and breeches.

LADY JANE.

Blue muslin dress, trimmed with satin; white satin under dress.

LADY BELL.

Pink muslin dress, trimmed the same.

MRS. BROMLEY.

Yellow satin dress, leno drapery, trimmed with lace.

MISS NEVILLE.

Grey cloth dress, trimmed with black velvet.

MADAME LA ROUGE.

White petticoat, worked flowers, ditto apron, yellow satin body.

Persons Represented.

	<i>Drury Lane.</i>	<i>Covent Garden.</i>
<i>Millamour</i> - - - - -	Mr. Rae.	Mr. Lewis.
<i>Dashwould</i> - - - - -	Mr. Harley.	Mr. Lee Lewis.
<i>Malvil</i> - - - - -	Mr. Bengough.	Mr. Wroughton.
<i>Bygrove</i> - - - - -	Mr. Powell.	Mr. Aikin.
<i>Capt. Bygrove</i> - - - - -	Mr. Barnard.	Mr. Booth.
<i>Sir John Millamour</i> - - - - -	Mr. R. Phillips.	Mr. Fearon.
<i>Sir Harry Lovewit</i> - - - - -	Mr. Penley.	Mr. Whitfield.
<i>Charles</i> - - - - -	Mr. Fisher.	Mr. Wewitzer.
<i>Lady Bell</i> - - - - -	Mrs. Alsop.	Mrs. Mattocks.
<i>Lady Jane</i> - - - - -	Mrs. Orger.	Miss Dayes.
<i>Mrs. Bromley</i> - - - - -	Mrs. Harlowe.	Mrs. Jackson.
<i>Miss Neville</i> - - - - -	Miss Boyce.	Mrs. Hartley.
<i>Madame La Rouge</i> - - - - -	Miss Tidswell.	Miss Ambrose.

KNOW YOUR OWN MIND.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Sir John Milamore's House.*

Enter SIR JOHN, and BYGROVE, L.H.

Byg. Why then I'll marry again, and disinherit him.

Sir John. Brother Bygrove, you think too severely in these matters.

Byg. Well argued, truly! he that should obey is to judge for himself, and you that are his governor, are to be directed by him.

Sir John. Your system and mine differ widely, brother Bygrove. My son is of an enlarged and liberal understanding, and I a father of mild authority.

Byg. If I see any thing wrong, I accost him directly: look ye, sir, do you think to go on in this fashion? Not during my life, I promise you: I will acknowledge you no longer than you prove worthy! and if you can't discern what is befitting you, I at least will judge what is proper on my part.

(Crosses to R.H.)

Sir John. Well, George and I have lived together as friends. From a boy, I endeavoured to subject him rather to his reason than his fears.

Byg. But the consequence of all this? Has he a settled opinion? a fixed principle for a moment?

Sir John. I beg your pardon. I see a person there. Charles, Charles, this way. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Enter CHARLES, L.H.

Sir John. Well, Charles, what is he about?

Char. Very busy, sir, a thousand things in hand.

Byg. And all at the same time, I'll warrant.

Char. We have a deal to employ us, sir.

Sir John. Have you sounded him in regard to what I mentioned last night?

Char. That's what I wanted to tell your honour. Last night, sir, as he was going to bed, I touched upon the subject; dropt a hint or two, that it is now time to think of raising heirs to himself: enlarged upon the comforts of matrimony, and I think with no small degree of eloquence.

Byg. The fellow is laughing at you.

Sir John. Well, and how? What effect?

Char. A very visible effect, sir. This morning early, my master rings his bell. Charles, says he, I have been considering what you said last night: I shall pay a visit to the young ladies, and, I believe, I shall marry one of them.

Sir John. There, Mr. Bygrove: I am for ever obliged to you, Charles. Well, go on.

Char. I fly immediately to get him his things to dress, and return in an instant. Charles, says he, then tossed himself back in his chair, beat the ground with his heel, and fell a reading. Won't your honour get ready to visit the young ladies?—The ladies, what ladies, you blockhead?—Lady Bell, and Lady Jane, your honour, Mrs. Bromley's handsome nieces. Po! you're a numskull, says he, with an oblique kind of a smile; stretched his arms, yawned, talked to himself, and bade me go about my business.

Byg. I knew it would end so. There is not a crane-neck carriage in town can give a short turn with him.

Sir John. This is provoking. Any body with him this morning?

Char. He has had a power of people with him, sir—a commission-broker, to sell him a company in a marching regiment; the Mayor of a borough, about a seat in parliament. And there are several with him now, sir. There is Sir Harry Lovewit, and—

Byg. Aye! Sir Harry! I am glad he is of age, and that I am no longer his guardian.

Char. He is with my master, sir; and there is Mr. Malvil, and Mr. Dashwould, and—(*Bell rings, R.H.*)—He rings, sir; you will pardon me; I must be gone, sir. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Byg. And that fellow, Dashwould; he is the ruin of your son, and of poor Sir Harry into the bargain. He has wit to ridicule you; invention to frame a story of you; humour to help it about,

and when he has set the town a laughing, he puts on a familiar air, and shakes you by the hand.

Enter MALVIL, R.H.

Mal. Intolerable, there is no being safe where he is. For my part, I had rather throw a veil over the infirmities of my friend, than seek a malicious pleasure in the detection. That's my way of thinking.

Sir John. I fancy you are right. This son of mine does so perplex me. (*Walks aside.*)

Mal. Pray, Mr. Bygrove, give me leave. I am sorry to hear certain whispers about a friend of ours.

Byg. About whom? the widow, Mrs. Bromley?

Mal. Oh! no, no; I have a great respect for her; though I—Pray don't you think she throws out the lure for a young husband?

Byg. For a husband, yes, but not too young a one; you can serve my interest in that quarter.

Mal. I know it: rely upon my friendship. But have you heard nothing of an eminent turkey merchant?

Byg. Mr. Freeport?

Mal. I say nothing: I don't like the affair: have you really heard nothing? Any money of yours in his hands?

Byg. Po! as safe as the bank.

Mal. I may be mistaken. I hope I am: I was in company the other night: several members of parliament present: they did not speak plainly: hints and inuendos only; you won't let it go any

further. His seat in the house they all agreed, is perfectly convenient at this juncture. I hope the cloud will blow over—I shall remember you with the widow.

Byg. One good turn deserves another : I shan't be unmindful of your interest.

Mal. There now you hurt me: you know my delicacy: must friendship never act a disinterested part? I esteem you, Mr. Bygrove, and that's sufficient. Sir John, give me leave to say, the man who busies himself about other people's affairs, is a pragmatistical character, and very dangerous in society.

Byg. So I have been telling Sir John. But to laugh at every thing is the fashion of the age. A pleasant good-for-nothing fellow is by most people preferred to modest merit. A man like Dashwould, who runs on—So! here comes Scandal in folio.

Enter DASHWOULD, R.H.

Dash. Sir John, I rejoice to see you. Mr. Bygrove, I kiss your hand. Malvil, have you been uneasy for any friend since?

Mal. Po! absurd! *(Walks away.)*

Dash. I have been laughing with your son, Sir John. Pray have I told you about Sir Richard Doriland?

Byg. You may spare him, sir, he is a very worthy man.

Dash. He is so: great good nature about him: I love sir Richard. You know he was divorced

from his wife ; a good fine woman, but an invincible idiot.

Mal. (L.H.) Look ye there, now, Mr. Bygrove !

Byg. My Lady Doriland, sir, was always accounted a very sensible woman.

Dash. She was so ; with too much spirit to be ever at ease, and a rage for pleasure, that broke the bubble as she grasped at it. She fainted away upon hearing that Mrs. Allnight had two card tables more than herself.

Byg. Inveterate malice !

Dash. They waged war a whole winter, for the honour of having the greatest number of fools, thinking of nothing but the odd trick. First, Mrs. All-night kept Sundays ; her ladyship did the same ; Mrs. All-night had forty tables ; her ladyship rose to fifty. Then one added, then t'other ; till every room in the house was crammed like the black hole at Calcutta ; and at last, upon casting up the account, Sir Richard sold off fifteen hundred acres, to clear incumbrances.

Sir John. Ridiculous ! and so they parted upon this ?

Dash. Don't you know the history of that business ?

Mal. Now mark him ; now.

Dash. Tender of reputation, Malvil !—The story is well known. She was detected with—the little foreign count—I call him the Salamander—I saw him five times in one winter upon the back of the fire at Bath, for cheating at cards.

Mal. Go on, sir, abuse every body. My lady was perfectly innocent. I know the whole affair: a mere contrivance to lay the foundation of a divorce.

Dash. So they gave out. Sir Richard did not care a nine-pin for her while she was his. You know his way; he despises what is in his possession, and languishes for what is not. Her ladyship was no sooner married to—what's his name?—His father was a footman, and madam Fortune, who every now and then loves a joke, sent him to the East Indies, and in a few years brought him back at the head of half a million, for the jest's sake.

Mal. Mr. Dashwould, upon my word, sir—Families to be run down in this manner!

Dash. Mushroom was his name: my lady Doriland was no sooner married to him, but up to his eyes Sir Richard was in love with her. He dressed at her; sighed at her; danced at her; she is now libelled in the Commons, and Sir Richard has a *crim. con.* against him in the King's Bench.

Mal. Pshaw! I shall stay no longer to hear this strain of defamation. [Exit, L.H.]

Dash. Malvil, must you leave us? A pleasant character this same Malvil.

Byg. He has a proper regard for his friends, sir.

Dash. Yes, but he is often present where their characters are canvassed, and is anxious about whispers which nobody has heard. He knows the use of hypocrisy better than a court chaplain.

Byg. There, call honesty by a burlesque name, and so pervert every thing.

Dash. Things are more perverted, Mr. Bygrove, when such men as Malvil make their vices do their work, under a mask of goodness: and with that stroke we'll dismiss his character.

Sir John. Ay, very right; my brother Bygrove has a regard for him, and so change the subject. My son, Mr. Dashwould, what does he intend?

Dash. Up to the eyes in love with Lady Bell, and determined to marry her.

Sir John. I told you so, Mr. Bygrove; I told you, you would soon see him settled in the world. Mr. Dashwould, I thank you: I'll step and confirm George in his resolution. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Dash. A good-natured man, Sir John, and does not want credulity.

Byg. Ay, there, the moment his back is turned.

Dash. Gulliver's Travels is a true history to him. His son has strange flights. First he was to be a lawyer; bought chambers in the Temple, eat his commons, and was called to the bar. Then the law is a damned dry, municipal study; the army is fitter for a gentleman; and as he was going to the war office to take out his commission, he saw my Lord Chancellor's coach go by; in an instant, back to the Temple, and no sooner there, "Po! plague! hang the law! better marry, and live like a gentleman." Now marriage is a galling yoke, and he does not know what he'll do. He calls his man Charles; sends him away; walks about the room, sits down, asks a question; thinks of something else; talks to him-

self, sings, whistles, lively, pensive, pleasant and melancholy in an instant. He approves, finds fault; he will, he will not: and in short, the man does not know his own mind for half a second.—Here comes Sir John.

Enter SIR JOHN, R.H.

Dash. You find him disposed to marry, Sir John?

Sir John. I hope so; he wavers a little: but still I—

Byg. Po! I have no patience: my advice has been all lost upon you. I wish it may end well. A good morning, Sir John. (*Going.*)

Dash. Mr. Bygrove, yours; Sir John will defend you in your absence.

Byg. If you will forget your friends in their absence, it is the greatest favour you can bestow upon them. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Dash. Did I ever tell you what happened to him last summer at Tunbridge?

Sir John. Excuse me for the present. This light young man! I must step and talk with my lawyer. (*Crosses to L.H.*)

Dash. I'll walk part of the way with you. A strange medley this same Mr. Bygrove: with something like wit, he is always abusing wit.—You must know, last summer at Tunbridge—

Sir John. Another time, if you please.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Dash. The story is worth your hearing: a party of us dined at the Sussex—

(*Following Sir John.*)

Enter CHARLES, R.H.

Char. Mr. Dashwould! Mr. Dashwould!

Re-enter DASHWOULD, L.H.

Dash. What's the matter, Charles?

Char. My master desires you won't go.

Enter SIR HARRY, R.H.

Sir H. Hey? what going to leave us?

Dash. Only a step with Sir John. Strange vagaries in your master's head, Charles!—Sir Harry! going to wait upon Miss Neville, I suppose. She has beauty, and you have a heart.

Sir H. Pshaw! there you wrong me now! Why will you?

Dash. Very well; be it so: I can't see to be sure; but take my word for it, you will marry that girl. Come, I'll follow you.

Sir H. I must not part with you: I had rather lose the whole college of physicians. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Dash. March on, Sir Harry.—(*Turns to Charles.*) Did you ever see such a Baronet? This fellow, Charles, is as ridiculous himself as any of them.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Char. Now have I but one man in the house, and he will be fifty different men in a moment. Hurry! hurry! nothing but hurry! Get me this; get me that; get me t'other. A poor servant does not know which way to turn himself in this house.

Enter RICHARD, R.H.

Char. Well, Richard, what are you about?

Rich. Why a man in a whirlwind may as well tell what he is about. Going to order the coachman to put up. He intends to change his dress, and walk to the Temple. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Char. What does he mean by talking of the Temple again? I hope we are not going to take to our studies once more. I hate the law: there is not a footman in the Temple has a grain of taste. All mere lawyers! They have not an idea out of the profession.

Enter ROBERT, R.H.

Rob. Richard! Richard! where is he gone?

Char. What's in the wind now?

Rob. The wind's in another quarter. He has been writing verses as he calls them, ever since the company left him. He has torn a quire of paper, I believe, and now he wants the carriage directly. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Char. Run and order it. I had rather be a country curate, than go on in this manner. (*Bell rings.*) What is he at now?

Mil. (*Within, R.H.*) Charles:—who answers there?

Char. Ay, now for the old work.

Enter MILLAMOUR, R.H.

Mil. Is the chariot ready?

Char. At the door, sir.

Mil. Do you step to Mrs. Bromley's, and—perhaps it would be better to—No, do you step, Charles, and—you need not mind it—another time will do as well. *[Exit, R.H.]*

Char. There again now; this is the way from morning to night.

Re-enter MILLAMOUR, R.H.

Mil. The sooner the better: I promised Sir John, and I will pay this visit. Lady Bell reigns sovereign of my heart. That vivacity of mind “Quick as her eyes, and as unfixt as those.”

Char. She is by far preferable to her sister, your honour.

Mil. Po! you are illiterate in these matters. The sober graces of Lady Jane!—Lady Bell advances like a conqueror, and demands your heart: Lady Jane seems unconscious of her charms, and yet enslaves you deeper.

Char. Which of them does your honour think—

Mil. Which of 'em, Charles? *(Reads a paper.)*
“I look'd, and I sigh'd, and I wished I could speak.”

Enter ROBERT, L.H.

Rob. Captain Bygrove, sir.

Mil. That's unlucky. I am not at home; tell him I went out an hour ago.

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE, L.H.

Mil. My dear Bygrove, I longed to see you. But why that pensive air? Still in love, I suppose.

[*Exeunt Char. and Rob.* R.H.]

Capt. B. My dear Millamour, you have guessed it. I am in love, and glory in my chains.

Mil. Shall I tell you a secret? I suspect myself, plaguily. Every thing is not as quiet here as it used to be.

Capt. B. Indulge the happy passion. Let wits and libertines say what they will; there is no true happiness but in the marriage state.

Mil. Why I have thought much upon the subject of late, and with a certain refinement, I don't know but a man may fashion a complying girl to his taste of happiness. Virtuous himself, he confirms her in her virtue; constant, he secures her fidelity: and by continuing the lover, instead of commencing the tyrant husband, he wins from her the sweetest exertion of tenderness and love. I shall most positively marry. Who is your idol? My dear boy, impart.

Capt. B. There I beg to be excused. You know my father?

Mil. Yes, I think I do.

Capt. B. I must not presume to think for myself. I must contrive some stratagem to make him propose the match. Were it to move first from me, I should be obliged to decamp from before the town at once.

Mil. I wish you success. My resolution is taken, and with the most amiable of her sex. She romps about the room like one of the graces; and deals about her wit with such a happy negligence—

Capt. B. An agreeable portrait, but mine is the very reverse. That equal serenity in all her ways! Wit she has, but without ostentation; and elegance itself seems the pure effect of nature.

Mil. (Aside.) I don't know whether that is not the true character for a wife. And pray, what progress have you made in her affections.

Capt. B. Enough to convince me that I am not quite unacceptable. My dear Millamour, I had rather fold that girl in my arms, than kiss his Majesty's hand for the first regiment of guards.

Mil. I am a lost man, I shall most positively marry. We will wonder at each others felicity; and be the envy of all our acquaintance.

Enter DASHWOULD, L.H.

Dash. (Crosses to Centre.) I am as good as my word, you see. Most noble Captain, your father was here this morning. A good agreeable old

gentleman, and about as pleasant as a night mare. Millamour, whom do you think I met since I saw you?

Mil. Whom?

Dash. Our friend Beverley, just imported from Paris, perfectly frenchified, and abusing every thing in this country—"Oh! there is no breathing their English atmosphere.—Roast beef and liberty will be the death of me."

Mil. Ha, ha! poor Beverley! I saw him last summer, at Paris, dressed in the style of an English fox-hunter: he swore there was not a morsel to eat in their country, and kept an opera-singer upon beef-steaks and oyster-sauce.

Dash. He has done his country great honour abroad.

Capt. B. He will settle at home now; he is going to be married.

Dash. Yes, I hear he is in love, and much good may it do him. I wish I may die, if I know so ridiculous a thing as love.—"My life!—My soul!—Hybla dwells upon her lips; ecstasy and bliss! blank verse and pastoral nonsense!" In a little time, the man wonders what bewitched him; an arm chair after dinner, and a box and dice till five in the morning, make all the comforts of his life.

Mil. Very true! Love is a ridiculous passion indeed.

Capt. B. Do you take up arms against me? But a moment since, just as you came in, he was acknowledging to me—

Mil. No, not I, truly; I acknowledge nothing.

Marriage is not to my taste, I promise you. The handsome wife!—she is all affectation; routs, drums, hurricanes, and intrigue!

Dash. And the ugly! she makes it up with good sense; pronounces upon wit; and talks you dead with maxims, characters, and reflections.

Mil. And the woman of high birth, she produces her pedigree, as her patent for vice and folly. “Seven’s the main,” and away goes your whole fortune.

Capt. B. Mere common place.

Dash. And the tender maukin! she doats upon you. “Don’t drink any more, my dear; you’ll take cold near that window, my love; pray don’t talk so much; you’ll flurry your spirits.”—And then kisses you before company.

Mil. So it is. Ha, ha, ha! (*Both laugh.*)

Capt. B. You play finely into one another’s hands.

Mil. Now mark the champion of the sex!

Dash. Yes; he’ll throw down the gauntlet for ‘em (*Both laugh.*)

Capt. B. Nay, decide it your own way. Since you won’t hear, gentlemen, there is a clear stage for you. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Dash. Fare ye well, most noble captain. A facetious companion! did you ever hear him say any thing?

Mil. He is in for it; and my father would fain reduce me to the same condition with one of Mrs. Bromley’s nieces. A good fine woman, Mrs. Bromley!

Dash. Has been! Were she now to rub her

cheek with a white handkerchief, her roses and lilies would go to the clear starcher.

Mil. Ha, ha! and yet she sets up for the rival of her nieces.

Dash. The young ladies are pretty well in their way too. Lady Bell has a brisk volubility of nothing, that she plays the pretty idiot with: and Lady Jane, a sly piece of formality, ready to go post for Scotland, with the first red-coat that asks her the question. We all dine at the widow's to-day, are you to be with us?

Mil. Yes, to meet you: the party will be diverting.

Dash. Observe old Bygrove. He pronounces with rigour upon the conduct of others, and hopes his own follies lie concealed. His whole struggle is to escape detection. Mark him with the widow: you will see him sighing for his deceased wife and Mrs. Bromley's charms at the same time. One eye shall weep for the dead, and the other ogle the living.

Mil. Ha, ha!—And then Malvil laying siege to Miss Neville!

Dash. Miss Neville is the best of them. Mrs. Bromley has taken her into her house, as a poor relation, whom she pities; and her pity is no more than the cruel art of tormenting an unhappy dependant upon her generosity.

Mil. But she has generosity. She has promised Miss Neville a fortune of five thousand pounds.

Dash. And so the hook is baited for Malvil. The widow flings out that snare, to counteract Sir Harry.

Mil. Sir Harry !

Dash. Yes ; he is in love with Miss Neville ; and the best of the story is, he is afraid I shall think him ridiculous. If I say the word, and promise not to laugh at him, he breaks his mind at once. Miss Neville sees clearly that he admires her, and of course will never listen to Malvil. The self-interested designs of that fellow shall be disappointed.

Mil. Admirable ! thou art a whimsical fellow. Come, I attend you. A pleasant group they are all together. It is as you say.

Our passions sicken, and our pleasures cloy ;
A fool to laugh at, is the height of joy.

[*Exeunt*, L.H.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Mrs. Bromley's House.*

Enter MRS. BROMLEY and MISS NEVILLE, R.H.

Mrs. B. Why, to be sure, Neville, there is something in what you say : one is so odd, and so I don't know how in a morning.

Miss N. Certainly, madam ; and then people of your turn, whose wit overflows in conversation, are liable to waste of spirits, and the alteration appears sooner in them.

Mrs. B. So it does: you observe very prettily upon things. Heigho! I am as faded as an old lutestring to-day.

Miss N. No, indeed, madam, you look very tolerably, considering.

Mrs. B. (*Aside.*) Considering! she grows pert, I think.—I am glad you think me not altogether intolerable.

Miss N. Ma'am!

Mrs. B. Tolerably! she is Lady Bell's prime agent. (*Aside.*) Has Sir Harry given you hopes lately?

Miss N. Sir Harry! I really don't understand why he is mentioned.

Mrs. B. Do you think it will be a match? And have you made up your quarrel with Lady Bell? (*Sits down.*)

Miss N. The sweetness of her disposition reconciles every thing.

Mrs. B. And is Millamour reconciled to Lady Bell?

Miss N. There was only a slight mistake which I explained.

Mrs. B. Oh! you explained? that was prudently done; I am glad to hear this: and do you think he loves her? Tell me, tell me all. Why, why do you think he loves her?

Miss N. He cannot be insensible of her merit; and the other day he asked me if you were likely to approve of his proposing for Lady Bell.

Mrs. B. And you told him.—Well!—what did you tell him?

Miss N. That you, no doubt, would be ready to promote the happiness of so amiable a young lady.

Mrs. B. You told him so ? (*Rises and walks to R.H.*) And so you are turned match-maker ? you busy yourself in my family !—Hey !—*Mrs.* Start-up ! you are dizened out, I think ; my wardrobe has supplied you.

Miss N. Your pardon, ma'am ; I had these things in the country, when you first shewed so much goodness to me.

Mrs. B. (*Crosses to R.H.*) What airs ! you know I hate to see creatures give themselves airs. Was not I obliged to provide you with every thing ?

Miss N. You have been very kind ; I always acknowledge it.

Mrs. B. Acknowledge it ! Does not every body know it ?

Miss N. Yes, ma'am, I dare say every body does know it.

Mrs. B. That's maliciously said : I can spy a sneer upon that false face. You suppose I have made my brags. That's what lurks in your ambiguous meaning. I deserve it : deliver me from poor relations.

Miss N. (*Aside.*) Now the storm begins !—I am sure I have said nothing to offend you. I am helpless, it is true, but your relation, and by that tie a gentlewoman still.

Mrs. B. I made you a gentlewoman. Did not I take you up in the country, where you lived in the parsonage-house, you and your sister,

with no other company to converse with, than the melancholy tombstones, where you read the high and mighty characters of John Hodge, and Deborah his wife? While your father's miserable horse, worn to a shadow with carrying double to the next market-town, limped about, with a dull alms-begging eye in quest of the wretched sustenance, that grew thriftily between the graves? Did not I take you out of your misery?

Miss N. You did, ma'am. (*In a softened tone.*)

Mrs. B. Did not I bring you home to the great house?

Miss N. You did, ma'am. (*Weeps aside.*)

Mrs. B. And I am finely thanked for it. Warm the snake, and it will turn upon you.

(*Crosses to R.H.*)

Miss N. I cannot bear to be insulted thus!

(*Aside.*)

Mrs. B. So! your spirit is humbled, is it?

Miss N. Give me leave to tell you, madam, that when people of superior fortune, whom Providence has enabled to bestow obligations, claim a right, from the favours they confer, to tyrannise over the hopes and fears of a mind in distress; they exercise a cruelty more barbarous than any in the whole history of human malice.

Mrs. B. Is this your gratitude?

Miss N. I could be thankful for happiness, if you permitted me to enjoy it: but when I find myself, under colour of protection, made the sport of every sudden whim; I have a spirit, madam, that can distinguish between real benevolence, and the pride of riches. (*Weeps.*)

Mrs. B. I fancy I have been too violent. After all this sour, I must sweeten her a little. (*Aside.*) Come, dry up your tears: you know I'm goodnatured in the main; I am only jealous that you don't seem to love me.

Miss N. Were that left to my own heart, every principle there would attach me to you. But to be dunned for gratitude—

Mrs. B. You are right; the observation is very just: I am in the wrong.—Come, let us be friends, I have a great regard for you, Neville.—(*Crosses to L.H.*)—The creature should visit with me, only she looks so well. (*Aside.*)—How! did I not hear Mr. Malvil's voice? yes, it is he; I am visible; I am at home; shew him in. Walk in, Mr. Malvil.

Enter MALVIL, L.H.

Mal. To a person of sentiment, like you, madam, a visit is paid with pleasure.

Mrs. B. You are very good to me. Neville, do you step and bring me the letter that lies upon my table.—[*Exit Miss Neville, R.H.*]—I am obliged to go out this morning.—(*Smiles at Malvil.*)—She looks mighty well; I have been speaking for you: our scheme will take. Sir Harry will not be able to rival you; she will be your reward for all your services to me.

Mal. Your generosity is above all praise, and so I was saying this moment to Mr. Bygrove: he is coming to wait on you.

Mrs. B. That's unlucky: I wanted to have

some talk with you : well, have you seen Millamour ?

Mal. Yes, and I find him apt : I have hopes of succeeding.

Mrs. B. Hush !—not so loud !—you think me mad, I believe. May I hazard myself with that wild man ?

Mal. Your virtue will reclaim him. I have a friendship for Millamour, and that is my reason for counteracting the designs of my friend Bygrove.—Mr. Bygrove has desired me to speak favourably of him to your ladyship.

Mrs. B. Oh ! but he kept his last wife mewed up in the country ; I should certainly expire in the country.

Mal. He is a very worthy man. I am sorry to see some oddities in him ; but that is very common in life. Vices always border upon virtues. Dashwould says,—but there is no believing his slander ;—he says Mr. Bygrove's sorrow for his deceased wife, is all a mere artifice, to weep himself into the good graces of another. But I don't believe it.

Mrs. B. I hear him coming. Do you go and take care of your interest with Neville.

Mal. I obey your commands. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Mrs. B. I shall make her fortune five thousand. Be sure you speak to Millamour. Go, go ; success attend you. [*Exit Mal. R.H.*]

Enter BYGROVE, L.H.

Byg. (Bowing.) Madam !

Mrs. B. This attention to one in my forlorn state is so obliging—

Byg. It is a favour on your part to receive a lost, dejected, spiritless—

Mrs. B. I admire your sensibility, Mr. Bygrove. That tender look, which you are forever casting back to a beloved, but irrecoverable object, shews so amiable a sorrow! oh! there is something exquisite in virtuous affection. I have found a pleasing indulgence in contemplations of that sort.

Byg. I have had my trials too. Heigho!

Mrs. B. I beg your pardon: I am recalling your afflictions: you should not give way; you should struggle a little. Heaven knows how I have struggled. I have appeared, indeed, with an air, but it was all struggling.—(*Looks and smiles.*)—I could divert you this morning. Do you know that your son is in love with Lady Jane?

Byg. In love! has he said any thing?

Mrs. B. I don't know as to that; but I can see what is lurking in his heart. He is above-stairs now; I don't half like his choice: Lady Bell is the proper match for him, and her fortune is the best. An estate, you know must come to her, by the family settlement. You should direct his choice.

Byg. This comes of his presuming to think for himself. Has he declared himself?

Mrs. B. I fancy not; but he hinted something to me, about a match in my family.

Byg. (*Looks at her and smiles.*) Why, a match

in your family has diverted me of late.—Heigho !
—It is the only thing which has entertained me
for a long time.

Mrs. B. I have had my fancies too. I should
like to talk further, but I am engaged abroad
this morning. Can I set you down? Will you
trust yourself with me?

Byg. You encourage a smile, madam.

Mrs. B. We shall be the town talk: but let
them talk; what need we mind? I will just
step and say a word to Neville.—You should
not be too solitary.

Byg. So my friends tell me.

Mrs. B. I shall be with you in a moment.
(*Going, R.H. returns.*) Do you know that we are
very like each other in our tempers? After all,
that is the true foundation of lasting friendships.
Poor dear Mr. Bromley!—(*Going, returns.*)—
It was similitude of temper brought us together;
and if ever I could be prevailed upon again,
similitude of temper must do it. Well, you
have diverted me this morning. Here comes
your son, talk to him now. [*Exit, R.H.*

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE, R.H.

Byg. Well, sir, what brings you to this house?

Capt. B. A morning visit, sir, merely to kill
half an hour.

Byg. There is nothing I hate so much as hy-
pocrisy. I know your errand: you must pre-
tend to be in love.

Capt. B. I, sir!

Byg. What have you been saying to Lady Jane? I thought I had cautioned you against presuming to think for yourself.

Capt. B. You have been very kind that way.

Byg. See what becomes of your friend Milla-mour's being left to his own discretion. The ass in the fable, gives but a faint image of him.

Capt. B. And if I, sir, to avoid his irresolution—

Byg. You are in the opposite extreme: he thinks too much and never decides. You never think at all, and so resolve without judgment. Lady Bell is the person I wish to see you married to:—go, and pay your addresses to her. I will settle that matter for you: you may then marry the person, to whom you have not degraded yourself, by pining, sighing, love verses, and I know not what.

Capt. B. This is all unaccountable to me, sir. If you will but hear me—

Enter MALVIL, R.H.

Byg. No, sir, no; I won't allow you to fetch a single sigh, till I say the word; when I give leave, you may then go and sigh till your heart is ready to break. I'll hear no more: no parlying with me. Leave the house this moment.

Capt. B. I obey. [*Crosses and exit, L.H.*]

Mal. I interrupt you.

Byg. No, no; I am glad to see you. Well, have you had any opportunity with the widow?

Mal. I have; she surprises me a little: she

has dropped the mask. I did not think she had been so eager to marry. We had some talk about you. You know my heart: I am always true to my friends: I see but one difficulty: she will never agree to live in the country.

Byg. The lover need not dispute that point, whatever the husband may do hereafter.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY *and* MISS NEVILLE, R.H.

Mrs. B. I beg your pardon, gentlemen. Neville, mind what I say to you: don't let those giddy girls go out in my absence; to walk in the Green Park, or run to hideous painters, under pretence of seeing odious pictures, that they may have an interview with more odious originals. Keep them at home; I will reward your pains. *Allons*, Mr. Bygrove.—[*Exit Bygrove*, L.H.]—Come, Mr. Malvil.

Mal. Had not I better stay, and—

Mrs. B. No, no; come now, you may return to her. [Exit, L.H.]

Mal. (*To Miss Neville*) You see that I am torn from you; but I shall return as soon as possible. [Exit, L.H.]

Miss N. Tyrannical woman! some virtue she has; but they are overshadowed by their opposite qualities. What does Lady Bell mean by talking to me of Sir Harry?—She does it—I know her goodness—she does it to soften affliction, and, if possible, divert a mind depressed with sorrow. Sir Harry never threw away a thought on me. He behaves, indeed, with mark-

ed civility ; but I dont know what to think of him. I must not aspire too high ; no, I have no pretensions.

Enter LADY JANE, R.H.

Lady Jane. Miss Neville, I am very angry with you. What's the matter ? Has any thing made you uneasy ?

Miss N. No : I am not remarkable for high spirits, you know.

Lady Jane. Why would not you give us your company ? How can you be so cross ? That sister of mine is the veriest madcap !

Miss N. Lady Bell is rather lively to be sure.

Lady Jane. But when she once begins, she hazards every thing, and talks sometimes like a very libertine.

Miss N. The overflowing of gaiety, and good humour.

Lady Jane. I wish she would restrain herself a little. Madam La Rouge is with her : she has the sweetest point eyes ever beheld. I was endeavouring to cheapen it, but Lady Bell was so troublesome ; she called me a thousand prudes, and will have it that nothing runs in my head but a lover. As I live and breathe, the giddy romp is coming. You must take my part.

Enter LADY BELL, R.H.

AIR.—LADY BELL,

Yes, I'm in love, I own it now,
And Celia has undone me ;
And yet, I swear, I can't tell how,
The pleasing plague stole on me.

What would I give to have some miserable swain talk in that stile of me ? "Belinda has undone me ;"—charming !

Miss N. A lively imagination is a blessing, and you are happy, Lady Bell.

Lady Bell. I am so ; but then I am not talked of ; I am losing all my time.

Lady Jane. Why, you bold creature ! I hate to hear you talk with so much intrepidity.

Lady Bell. Prudery ! my dear sister, downright prudery ! I am not for making mysteries of what all the world knows.

Lady Jane. And how do I make mysteries, pray ?

Lady Bell. Why you confident thing ! I'll prove it against you.

Lady Jane. But what ? what ? what will you prove ?

Lady Bell. That you are ready to jump out of your little wits for a husband, my demure, sober sister.—(*Crosses to centre.*)—Miss Neville, a poet is not more eager for the success of a new comedy, nor one of his brother poets more desirous to see it fail, than that girl is to throw herself into the arms of a man.

Lady Jane. All scandal, sister.

Lady Bell. Miss Neville shall be judge.

Lady Jane. Your story is mere invention.

Lady Bell. Was there ever such a wrangler?

Lady Jane. You'll not make good your words.

Lady Bell. (*Pats her hand.*) Hold your tongue, miss, will you?

Lady Jane. Very well, go on.

Lady Bell. Will you have done? Now, mind, Miss Neville. She does not want to be married, she says. The other night, my young madam, whose thoughts are always composed and even, went to sleep as soon as we got to bed, and then her busy imagination went to work with all the vivacity of an intriguing chamber-maid.

Lady Jane. And how can you tell that, pray?

Lady Bell. Out of your own mouth you shall be judged. Miss Neville, she talked in her sleep, like a beauty in a side box, and then fell a singing.

No, no ; he is true, and I believe ;

He look'd, he sigh'd, he can't deceive ;

No, no ; I have conquer'd ; he is mine ;

My heart is touch'd, and I resign.

Lady Jane. Oh ! you scurrilous creature.

Miss N. Fairly caught, Lady Jane.

Lady Jane. All odious slander ; you judge of me by yourself.

Lady Bell. I do so. I mean to be married, and am frank enough to own it. But you may let "concealment feed on your damask cheek." My damask cheek, I hope, was made for other purposes.

Lady Jane. Gracious! there is no bearing this. What a mad girl you are!

Lady Bell. Not in the least. A natural character. One would not, to be sure, tell a hideous man that one loves him; but when one has encouraged him by degrees, and drawn him on like a new glove, and perhaps done him a mischief in the doing of it, why then—

Lady Jane. What then?

Lady Bell. One would draw him off again, and may be ask a pretty fellow to help a body; and then the wretch looks so piteous, and kneels at your feet, then rises in a jealous fit. I take my everlasting farewell; never to return; no, never; what to her? who encouraged me? encouraged him? who promised? broke her promise? The treacherous, faithless, dear deluding—then returns in an instant; hands dangling; eyes imploring: tongue faltering: *Lady Bell—Lady Bell*—when you know that I adore you. And I burst into a fit of laughter in his face. Oh! that's my joy, my triumph, my supreme delight.

(*Crosses to R.H.*)

Lady Jane. And is not there a kind of cruelty in all this?

Lady Bell. Oh! your very humble servant, my sweet Lady Graveairs. Cruelty! The difference between you and me, sister, is this; you deny your love to your female friends, and own it to the man; now I deny it to him, but among ourselves, I fairly own that Miss Neville is not more impatient to be married to Sir Harry, than I to——

Miss N. Who, I? Spare, me, I beg of you. Why Sir Harry?

Lady Jane. Now, now, your turn is come. Never spare her, sister.

Miss N. You must excuse me. I am not in spirits for all this raillery. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Lady Jane. You shan't leave us.

Miss N. Give me leave: I beg you will. I'll go and talk to Madam La Rouge. Perhaps I may succeed for you. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Lady Jane. Well, if you must go. How you run on, sister! And are you really in love?

Lady Bell. Over head and ears.

Lady Jane. With whom?

Lady Bell. Not with captain Bygrove: how alarmed you are! With Millamour, sister.

Lady Jane. Fix that roving temper, if you can: he will be on his knees to you, and the first pair of black eyes that enters the room will be through his heart.

Lady Bell. As to that, I give myself very little trouble: but if I could once catch him paying his adoration to me, my aunt Bromley does not rise and sink poor Miss Neville's spirits with such exquisite skill in the art of tormenting, as I should his. I should use him as the men do their punch: a little more sweet, a little more sour; a little more spirit: more acid again; then perhaps say it's good for nothing; and then, perhaps—

Lady Jane. What?

Lady Bell. Sip it up at last, as you would do at first. You wicked girl, how could you ask me

such a question? La! what am I about? I have a thousand things to do.

Enter MISS NEVILLE and MADAM LA ROUGE, R.H.

La Rou. Ah! my lady! always so gay! English climate no effect upon you. *De manieres de Paris* for all de vorl. *En verite vous est charmante,*

Lady Bell. Oh! Madam La Rogue, you say such polite things: but you rob me of all my money. My sister is rich: you had better deal with her. Sister, you'll be married before me.

(Sings.)

No, no, he is true, and I believe, &c. [*Exit*, R.H.]

Lady Jane. Was ever any thing so crazy?

[*Exit*, R.H.]

La Rou. Mademoiselle, I tell you, persuade my lady to have de lace, and you come to my house, me give you ver pretty present.

Miss N. Oh! you have a national talent for applying a little bribery.

La Rou. Ah! *Monsieur Malvil.*

Enter MALVIL, L.H.D.

Mal. Madam La Rouge, I did not expect this pleasure.

La Rou. It is always pleasure to see *mes amis*;—You have ver good choice—Sir Harry have taste as well as you. Mademoiselle, you are ver great favourite.

Miss N. A favourite! keep your vivacity for

some other subject: don't make me the town talk.

La Rou. Monsieur, you lose all your time. (*Goes to him, and speaks low.*) You wait de fortune from madam Bromley: Sir Harry will take her vidout any money at all. Vat you slow for?

Mal. Are the apartments kept ready at your house?

La Rou. De apartment it is ready. You take it two, tree weeks ago, and pay de rent for noting. —I leave you vid de lady; and I go mind *mes affaires*. *Bon voyage.* [*Exit, L.H.*]

Mal. I have disengaged myself, to have the honour of attending you.

Miss N. Your attention is thrown away. Did not I hear Mr. Millamour's voice?

Mal. Yes; he came with me; he is gone into the next room to pay his compliments to Lady Jane. You look chagrined, what has disturbed you?

Miss N. The old story; Mrs. Bromley's eternal whims.

Mal. Your delicacy charms me: it has fixed me yours. I long for nothing so much, as to see you out of her power. They have a strange report about town: people will be talking; the whisper goes that Mr. Bygrove, amidst all his grief, is slily in a hurry for another wife. Mrs. Bromley, they say, encourages him: and at the same time has a design upon my friend Millamour.

Miss N. The world is not always wrong.

Mal. Malice will be busy; and does not spare the young ladies.

Miss N. If any thing is said to their disadvantage, believe me, they do not deserve it.

Mal. I dare say not: I don't think they are too forward. I am sorry to see, in one of the papers to-day, a character of Sir Harry, not at all favourable. His little follies, his whims, and caprices one does not mind: he may walk in Dashwould's train as long as he pleases; that only makes him ridiculous. But it grieves me to hear that perfidy stains his character, and, as I am told the worst of perfidy; the ruin of beauty and innocence is his ruling passion.

Miss N. This is very odd: somebody has been at the trouble of sending me an anonymous letter to that very effect: and why to me? I am not able to decypher.

Mal. I don't like anonymous letters. In general they aim at mischief, but this perhaps, is meant as a caution to you: it must be a friend that sent it. Mrs. Bromley, I know, has no opinion of Sir Harry. His designs, with regard to you, she does not think honourable. My heart interests me for you. You know I am all heart. The plan which Mrs. Bromley has proposed!—Hark! I think I hear Millamour coming. I'll follow you up stairs.

Miss N. O, sir! you have frightened me out of my wits.

[*Exit*, R.H.S.E.]

Mal. She loves Sir Harry, I see; and yet she shan't slip through my hands. I can set on Mrs. Bromley to lead her a weary life, and if I can prevail upon Millamour to renounce Lady Bell, and marry the widow, my business is done.

When Miss Neville is heartily tormented by Mrs. Bromley, affliction softens the mind, and I may then decoy her away, and stand upon terms with the family. But Dashwould's wit will fly about. No matter: he is a sad scoundrel, and does not mind how he murders reputations. So! here comes Millamour. I must get clear of him, and talk further with Miss Neville.

Enter MILLAMOUR, R.H.

Mil. From this moment I blot all other women from my memory. Malvil, wish me joy. The perplexity of choice is now at an end.

Mal. Why, what has happened?

Mil. Lovely Lady Jane.

"And yield her charms of mind with sweet delay."
I can't stay to tell you now.

Mal. Nor will I stay to interrupt your raptures. You know, I wish you success.

[Exit, R.H.S.E.]

Enter LADY BELL, R.H.

Lady B. (Reading.)

Who yields too soon, must soon her lover lose.

Would you restrain him long? then long refuse.

Mil. (Looks at her and smiles.) There is something commanding in that air of vivacity.

Lady B. (Reads.)

*Oft at the door let him for entrance wait,
There let him in——*

How! Millamour here! how could you surprise

me so? You horrid thing! how long have you been here?

Mil. Been, madam?—I have been—I have been in the next room, paying my respects to your sister.

Lady Bell. And never inquired for poor Lady Bell?

Mil. Your ladyship wrongs me. You are doing injustice to your own charms: they can never be forgot.

Lady Bell. I see how it is: the other day you was listed in my service, and now a deserter to my sister! you are right, you would have been upon hard duty with me.

Mil. Any duty but a forlorn hope would be—

Lady Bell. Hope!—why sure, you would not have had the intolerable assurance, to entertain the smallest degree of hope. My sister, I suppose, has given you some hope. Ay! that's her way: she moves by settled rules, and shines with equal light. Now I—I am a mere comet, I blaze of a sudden; dazzle for a while, then wheel away, and am thought of no more.

(Crosses to L.H.)

Mil. That gaiety of her's is charming. (*Aside.*)
The impression your ladyship makes——

Lady Bell. Words; mere words;—no; I am a strange piece of wild nature: never the same for two minutes together. Now, my sister, she is a Prussian blue, holds her colour, and is always the same.—I—I am a more changeable silk—I shift about, and display my wit, and my folly, so curiously blended, that no body can tell where

one begins, or the other ends. I am not worth your notice. (*Sings, and crosses to R.H.*)

Mil. (*Looking at her.*) She has described herself admirably; without variety, a woman is a downright piece of insipidity.

Lady Bell. Yes, I have my whims. Never the same for two minutes together. Now I love to give a scope to folly, and the men say, "curse catch her, she pleases more, when in the wrong; than other women when they are in the right." Then good sense is the word; and the next moment I can't bear the fatigue of thinking; why won't somebody write a comedy to divert me? Then all spirit, and I long to lead up the ball.

Ladies, like variegated tulips, show

'Tis to their weakness all their charms they owe.

(*Sings, and crosses to L.H.*)

Mil. (*Aside.*) Lady Jane is mere mediocrity compared to her.

Lady Bell. Lord! I run on a strange rate. Yours, Mr. Millamour: au revoir. (*Crosses to R.H.*)

Mil. A moment longer: you must not leave me: You possess my heart: possess it without a rival.

Lady Bell. Hey! what's the matter now?

Mil. Do not trifle with a passion sincere as mine. I adore you, my Lady Bell; adore your matchless charms; thus on my knees adore.

Lady Bell. Stay, stay; let me see what the poet says, (*Reads quick.*)

Oft at your door let him for ent'rance wait,

There let him kneel, and threaten and entreat.

There, stay there; don't offer to stir. Now put

up both your hands, and pray, pray, have compassion, Lady Bell. [Exit laughing, R.H.

Mil. She flies disdainful from her lover's view,
Yet looks and bids him, as she flies, pursue.
[Exit, R.H.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at Mrs. Bromley's.*

Enter LADY JANE, and CAPT. BYGROVE, R.H.

Lady Jane. And laid his commands upon you to address my sister?

Capt. B. Most peremptorily.

Lady Jane. You have obeyed him, I hope.

Capt. B. You know your power too well; you know that I am devoted to you, and that my happiness depends upon the promise you have made me.

Lady Jane. There, that is always the way with you men: every thing we say, is construed into a promise.

Capt. B. And have not you promised?

Lady Jane. (Looks at him, and smiles.) Need I answer that question? How easily frightened you are! but you have some reason to be alarm-

ed. Millamour has been on his knees to me, breathing such raptures.

Capt. B. Ay!—who has set him on?—what can be at the bottom of this?—And have you listened to him?—Here comes Dashwould; he perhaps can explain.

Lady Jane. He will only laugh at us; and so I'll make my escape. *(Going.)*

Capt. B. Not to hear Millamour again, I hope. *(Takes her hand.)*

Lady Jane. Well, well, to purchase my liberty, you need not fear. I have received his vows, delivered with such ardour!—how terrified you look!—I have listened to him, to alarm my sister with an idea of Millamour's growing passion for me. If her jealousy is once touched, it may fix her resolution. At present, she is as volatile as Millamour himself.

Enter DASHWOULD, R.H.

Dash. As volatile as Millamour? what can that be? I never knew any thing that would bear a comparison.

Lady Jane. What think you of my sister?

Dash. Lady Bell has her whims. I left her above stairs, in close conference with Millamour; he has deserted your ladyship already, Mrs. Bromley will be the next, I hope: your father, Captain, would grieve more for that, than for his deceased wife.

Lady Jane. And then Miss Neville's turn may come,

Dash. Oh! no. To sport with her would be inhumanity. But a brisk widow, is fair game.

Capt. B. Yes, and it may help to cure my father of his folly.

Lady Jane. It would be sport, but I despair of it. Well, there's a gentleman wants your advice, and so I'll leave you together.

[*Crosses, and exit, R.H.*]

Capt. B. My dear Dashwould, you must assist me.

Dash. What distresses you?

Capt. B. My evil genius is at work. You know what my father has resolv'd upon. Lady Bell is the person he chooses for me.

Dash. I know all that business: a counterplot of the widow's fertile brain, to disappoint Lady Bell, and wreak her malice on Millamour.

Capt. B. But the malice falls on me only. Why will not Millamour know his own mind? Lady Bell loves him; I know she does. I am thwarted in the tenderest point; what must be done?

Dash. Do as they would have you: you ensure success. Millamour's jealousy takes fire upon the first alarm, and while the passion holds, he will have vigour enough to act decisively.

Capt. B. May I hazard the experiment?

Dash. It's a sure card. Take my advice.

[*Enter MISS NEVILLE, R.H.*]

Miss N. Mrs. Bromley's coach has just stopped at the door: had not you better step up stairs, gentlemen?

Enter SIR HARRY, R.H.

Sir Har. Dashwould, you are absent too long. They are all as dull as a funeral, above stairs.

Dash. (*Aside to Capt. B.*) How the baronet follows Miss Neville from room to room!—Come, Captain, I'll play a game of picquet with you before dinner—*Allons!* [*Exit with Capt. B.* R.H.]

Sir Har. If I might have the liberty, ma'am, to—

Miss N. Another time, if you please, Sir Harry. Mrs. Bromley is coming; I hear her voice.

Sir Har. And you promise me the hearing?

Miss N. You are entitled to it sir. I beg you'll leave me now.

Sir H. I obey your commands; I am gone: you'll remember. [*Exit,* R.H.]

Miss N. Here she comes; and I think in good humour.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY, L.H.

Mrs. B. Oh! I am heartily tired. I have been paying visits to people who have never been let into my house, and who, I hope, will never be at home for me. I hate them all, but out of civility, we must keep up an acquaintance. Where are the girls? Has any body been here?

Miss N. Mr. Millamour, ma'am, and the rest of the gentlemen that dine here: they are all above stairs.

Mrs. B. Stupidity! did I not give orders—How long has Millamour been here?

Miss N. About an hour.

Mrs. B. With Lady Bell, I suppose—Thou base ingratitude! and Sir Harry is here too, I reckon. Does your match go on? You shall go back to the country, I promise you. You'll be the ruin of those girls. They shall have no visitors when my back is turned. I'll give orders to all the servants this very moment.

(*Going, L.H.*)

Enter SIR JOHN MILLAMOUR, L.H.

Sir John. To see Mrs. Bromley looking so well—

Mrs. B. You are very polite, sir. Business calls me now, Sir John; I beg your pardon.

[*Crosses, and exit, L.H.*]

Sir John. Has my son been here to-day?

Miss N. He is above stairs with Lady Bell, sir.

Mrs. B. (*Within, L.H.*) Miss Neville, Neville, I say.

Miss N. You'll excuse me, Sir John; what can she want? [*Crosses, and exit, L.H.*]

Sir John. This visit portends some good, I hope; I shall be happy if he has declared himself. I'll step and see what he is about.

[*Crosses to L.H.*]

Enter MILLAMOUR, R.H.

Mil. Exquisite! lovely angel!

Sir John. Well!—how! what!

Mil. I beg your pardon, sir, I am not at lei-

sure ; I am in the third region ; and can't descend to the language of the nether world.

Sir John. Then you are in love, George.

Mil. She is a sister of the graces, and surpasses the other three. I am fixed ; unalterably fixed ; and am going about the marriage articles directly.

Sir John. They are at my lawyer's, ready engrossed, and only wait for the lady's name to fill up the blanks.

Mil. I know it, sir ; I must step for them ; I have it through my heart : I feel it here : I am your humble servant, sir. (*Going, L.H.*)

Sir John. No, no, do you stay here ; I'll step for Mr. Copyhold. The writings shall be here in ten minutes. [*Crosses, and exit, L.H.*]

Mil. The sooner the better, sir.

*Let those love now, who never lov'd before ;
Let those who always lov'd, now love the more.
Loll, tol lol. (*Sings.*)*

Enter MALVIL, L.H.

Mal. Bravo ! you seem in prodigious spirits.

Mil. I am so : I am happy in myself, and happy in my friends, and happy in every circumstance, and in tip-top spirits, and—my dear Malvil, yours down to the ground.

Mal. Methinks I sympathize with you. When our friends are happy, the sensation is well called a fellow feeling.

Mil. Malvil, I thank you ; your turn of mind is formed for lasting friendship. With Dash-

would it is all dissipation and giddy mirth, the mere bubble of pleasure. To you, I may talk seriously. The topic of the day is enough for Dashwould. I can now tell you, that I shall be happy for life. But for Dashwould, I should have been settled long ago. That fellow has led me into a thousand errors.

Mal. He has his admirers, and not without reason. He thinks me his enemy. Dashwould, notwithstanding all his faults, does hit the mark sometimes. I don't usually laugh at his pleasantries; I don't like to encourage him too much: but it must be owned, he is often right. Behind his back I cannot help being diverted by him. He has a quick insight into characters.

Mil. No want of penetration there.

Mal. He is a shrewd observer.

Mil. Nobody more so.

Mal. If he has a regard for any body, it is for you. You are the only man I never heard him speak ill of. A match with Lady Bell is not to his mind. He talked seriously on the subject. Has not he told you?

Mil. Not a syllable.

Mal. I wonder at that. Lady Bell, he says, shewed herself early. Impatient of advice, attentive to nothing but her beauty! whole days at her looking-glass—I repeat his very words.—At her toilette every feature had its instructions how to look; but no instruction for the mind. And then, says he, that terrible love of gaming!—

Mil. Gaming!

Mal. Don't you know it? I can't say I ever saw it myself. Time will determine her character.

Mil. If she loves gaming, it is pretty well determined already. But my Lady Jane, there's a model for her sex to imitate.

Mal. Have you watched her well? People should appear what they really are. Mrs. Bromley has been very communicative about Lady Jane.

Mil. You alarm me. My dear friend, explain.

Mal. To do Lady Bell justice, she is above disguise. And though she has her faults, I have seen her please by those very faults.

Mil. (*Smiling.*) And so have I. Her very blemishes are beauty spots.

Mal. No frankness about the youngest girl. It is friendship for you that makes me speak. Her character is all forced, studied, put on with her rouge.

Mil. Does she paint?

Mal. A little; the prudent touch. I am sorry for her. When she is settled in the world, many qualities, which now lie concealed, will break out into open daylight.

Mil. What a masked battery there will be to play off upon her husband!

Mal. Their aunt told me all in confidence. You may judge how painful it is to her. I have known the family for some time. I can't but be sorry for the young ladies.

Mil. And since this is the case, I don't care how little I know of them, or their family.

Mal. No occasion to quarrel with the family. Great merit about Mrs. Bromley. She made an admirable wife, and at an early period. She was but seventeen when she was married.

Mil. No more?

Mal. Not an hour: she is not thirty: an estate in her own right, and the command of half a borough. No opposition there; the old houses have the votes. A man may get a seat without trouble. Does not Sir John want to see you in Parliament?

Mil. Yes. It would give him pleasure.

Mal. Well, you will judge for yourself. Were I as you, I should know what course to take. Here she comes! a good fine woman! a man may there sit down to his happiness at once.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY, L.H.

Mrs. B. Mr. Millamour.—(*Curtsies.*)—Mr. Malvil, what have you done with Mr. Bygrove?

Mal. I parted with him where you set us down.—(*Speaks to her aside.*)—I have talked to Millamour, and I think it will do.

Mrs. B. Go you up stairs.

(*Aside to Malvil, L.H.*)

Mal. How charmingly you look! like Lady Bell's eldest sister!

Mrs. B. Po! you are laughing at me.

Mal. Not I, truly: I appeal to Millamour. I'll take the liberty to join the company above.—(*Aside to Mil.*)—She is the best of the family.

[*Exit, M.D.*]

Mrs. B. A valuable man Malvil is! He has a great esteem for you, sir. His sincerity is unequalled. You seem thoughtful, Mr. Millamour.

Mil. Thoughtful, ma'am!—There are certain

subjects that—what Malvil says is true.—A man may marry her, and sit down to his happiness at once. (*Aside.*)

Mrs. B. Sir John has been saying a great deal to me about you.

Mil. Has he, ma'am!—There is a circumstance, which he is as yet a stranger to—a circumstance which, to communicate, will perhaps—it is what I have long wished, and—

Mrs. B. Faultering! hesitating! (*Aside.*) I interrupt you.

Mil. There is a circumstance, ma'am!—the affair is—my father for a long time—Sir John, for a long time—Sir John has wished—

Mrs. B. To see you married?

Mil. To see me married, ma'am—and—he has—he has wished it much.—And a settlement, by way of jointure,—long ready for the lady's name—that is—any lady, who shall honour me with her affection—and—

Mrs. B. No lady can be insensible of your pretensions.

Mil. You are very good, ma'am; and after long observation, and a lasting passion grafted on it, which, though silent hitherto—yet working secretly—when disclosed at length—may to the person in the world—who already formed by experience, may in every respect—and if without presuming too far—

Mrs. B. What a delicate confusion he is in.

(*Aside.*)

Mil. And if this paper, ma'am—

Mrs. B. (*Taking the Paper.*) When given by you, sir—

Enter BYGROVE, L.H.

Perverse and cruel ! *(Walks aside.)*

Byg. You both look grave ; nothing amiss, I hope.

Mrs. B. Every thing is as it should be, sir. Mr. Millamour will do what is right—*(Smiling at him.)*—You may leave it all to him ; trust to his judgment.

Enter SIR HARRY, M.D.

Sir H. Millamour, I have such a story for you : Malvil and Dashwould have been quarrelling about you, and—

Byg. Po ! and here they all come ; I knew the substance could not be far off, when the shadow projected before it.

Enter LADY BELL, DASHWOULD, and MALVIL, M.D.

Lady Bell. Mr. Dashwould, do you think I'll bear this ? What liberty will you take next ? You think, because I laugh, that I am not offended.—Aunt, I received a letter, and he has attempted to snatch it from me.

Dash. Why it brings a little cargo of ridicule from the country, and my friend Malvil sees no joke in it.

Mal. When my friend's name is brought in question, sir—

Lady Bell. It is diverting, notwithstanding.—

Aunt, what do you think! My cousin Cynthia, you know, was to be married to Sir George Squanderstock; her mother opposed it, and broke off the match, and now it's come out, that she was all the time the clandestine rival of her own daughter.

Mil. Not inapplicable to the present business.
(*Aside.*)

Mrs. B. Go, you giddy girl, no such thing!

Mil. (*Aside.*) She charms by her very faults.

Sir H. (*Goes up to Bygrove.*) And Dash would has been saying—

Byg. Po! repeat none of his sayings to me.

Lady Bell. Did you say any thing, Mr. Dashwould? What was it? (*Crosses to Dash. R.H.*)

Dash. Oh! nothing. Sir George Squanderstock is my very good friend.

Mal. And for that reason you might spare him. No man is without his faults.

Dash. Ay, allow him faults, out of tenderness.

Byg. Sir George is a valuable man, sir, and represents his country to great advantage.

Dash. He does so; takes a world of pains; nothing can escape him; Manilla ransom not paid; there must be a motion about that matter: he knots his handkerchief to remember it.—Scarcity of corn! another knot—triennial parliaments—(*Knots.*)—juries judges of law as well as fact—(*Knots.*)—national debt—(*Knots.*)—bail in criminal cases—(*Knots.*)—and so on he goes, till his handkerchief is twisted into questions of state; the liberties and fortunes of all posterity dangling like a bede roll; he puts it in his pock-

et, drives to the gaming table, and the next morning his handkerchief goes to the wash, and his country and the minority are both left in the suds.

Lady Bell. What a description! }
Sir H. Hey! lively Lady Bell! } (*Both laugh.*)

Mil. Ho! ho! I thank you, Dashwould.

Mrs. B. (*Aside to Millamour.*) How can you encourage him? Let us leave them to themselves.

Mal. You see, Mr. Bygrove—

Byg. Ay! thus he gets a story to graft his malice upon, and then he sets the table in a roar at the next tavern.

Sir H. Never be out of humour with Dashwould, Mr. Bygrove; he keeps me alive; he has been exhibiting pictures of this sort all the morning, as we rambled about the town.

Byg. Go on, Sir Harry, ape your friend in all his follies; be the nimble marmozet; to grin at his tricks, and try to play them over again yourself.

Sir H. Well now, that is too severe: Dashwould, defend me from his wit. You know I swallow all your good things.

Dash. You never bring any of them up.

Enter MISS NEVILLE, L.H. and whispers Mrs. Bromley.

Mrs. B. Very well, Neville, I'll come presently.
 [*Exit Miss Neville, L.H.*]

Mal. (*Looking at Miss Neville.*) I shall stay no longer. Mr. Bygrove, will you walk?

[*Exit, L.H.*

Byg. No, sir, I shall not leave the enemy in this room behind me : a bad translator of an ancient poet, is not so sure to deface his original, as his licentious strain to disparage every character.

Dash. Sir Harry, he will neither give nor take a joke.

Sir H. No, I told you so.

Byg. Let me tell you once for all sir—

Dash. I wish you would.

Byg. Why interrupt? Do you know what I was going to say?

Dash. No, do you?

Mil. I'll leave them all to themselves.

[*Steals out, M.D.*

Mrs. B. (*Aside.*) Millamour gone! [*Exit, M.D.*

Byg. And what does all this mighty wit amount to? The wit in vogue, exposes one man; makes another expose herself; gets into the secrets of an intimate acquaintance, and publishes a story to the world; belies a friend; puts an anecdote, a letter, an epigram into the newspaper; and that is the whole amount of modern wit.

Dash. A strain of morose invective is more diverting to be sure.

Byg. (*Looking about for Mrs. Bromley.*) Well, sir, we'll adjourn the debate. You may go on; misrepresent every thing; if there is nothing ridiculous, invent a story; and when you have done it, it is but a cheap and frivolous talent.

Has a lady a good natural bloom? Her paint must be an expensive article. Does she look grave? She will sin the deeper. Is she gay and affable? Her true character will come out at the Commons. That is the whole of your art, and I leave you to the practice of it.

(*Going, L.H.*)

Dash. Satirical Bygrove! now the widow has him in tow.

Byg. (*Turning round.*) Could not you stay till my back was fairly turned? [*Exit, L.H.*]

Dash. What a look there was!

Lady Bell. At what a rate you run on! you keep the field against them all.

Dash. Sir Harry, step up, and watch him with the widow.

Sir H. I will; don't stay too long.

Dash. I'll follow you: and hark, make your party good with Miss Neville.

Sir H. You see, Lady Bell, a fling at every body. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Dash. The baronet does not want parts; that is to say, he has very good materials to play the fool with. I shall get him to marry Miss Neville.

Lady Bell. Bring that about, and you will for once do a serious action, for which every body will honour you.

Dash. In the mean time, do you watch your aunt Bromley: she is your rival.

Lady Bell. Rival? that would be charming!

Dash. It is even so. Now Millamour's understanding is good, but his passions quick: if you play your cards right—

Lady Bell. Are you going to teach me how to manage a man?

Dash. Coquetry will never succeed with him. A quicksand does not shift so often as his temper. You must take him at his word, and never give him time to change and veer about.

Lady Bell. Totally out of nature.

Dash. Oh! very well; I give up the point.

[*Exit, M.D.*]

Lady Bell. You may leave the man to my management. My aunt Bromley rival me! that would be delightful.

Enter LADY JANE, M.D.

Well, sister.

Lady Jane. Can you be serious for a moment.

Lady Bell. Well, the solemnity of that look! Must I set my face by yours, and contract a wrinkle, by a formal economy of features, which you, like the rest of the world, mistake for wisdom?

Lady Jane. Will you hear me? They are hurrying this match too fast, I think. Sir John is come, and his lawyer is expected every moment. He wants to conclude the affair this day, and my aunt does not oppose it. But I don't like all this hurry.

Lady Bell. And why need you be concerned about it?

Lady Jane. Do you think Millamour capable of love?

Lady Bell. For the moment. It will be difficult to fix him.

Lady Jane. What would you have me do!

Lady Bell. Do?—Nothing.

Lady Jane. How silly! you know it is not my seeking.

Lady Bell. What are you about? Talking in your sleep again? *Lady Jane*, wake yourself. What have you taken into your head?

Lady Jane. Why, since Mr. Millamour has prevailed with me—

Lady Bell. His affections then are fixed upon you?—Why the man has been dying at my feet, with a face as long as my arm.

Lady Jane. You will permit me to laugh in my turn.

Lady Bell. Oh! I can laugh with you, and at you, and at him too. This gives spirit to the business: here are difficulties, and difficulties enhance victory, and victory is triumph.

Lady Jane. Very well! oh! brave! laugh away! you will be undeceived presently.—If this does not take, I am at the end of my line.

[*Exit*, L.H.]

Lady Bell. What does all this mean? Rivalled, outwitted by my sister! Insupportable! This begins to grow serious.

Enter MILLAMOUR, M.D.

Mil. Sdeath! she is here! Sir John is quite impatient, and I am going for his attorney.

Lady Bell. And *Lady Jane* is impatient too: she is the object of your choice.

Mil. *Lady Jane*! you are pleasant, very pleasant!

Lady Bell. She has told me with inflexible gravity !

Mil. She is a great wit ; and great wits have great quickness of invention ; and so a story is easily dressed up. I could crack my sides with laughing. If trifling civilities have been received as a declaration of love—

Lady Bell. And is that the case ? Very whimsical indeed !

Mil. Yes, very whimsical ! I am eternally yours, ma'am, and I am on the wing, and your ladyship's adorer.—Confusion ! (*Going, L.H.*)

Enter LADY JANE.

Lady Jane. (*Aside.*) Now to plague them both.—Sister, you may hear it from himself.

Lady Bell. That lady, sir, has the strangest notion—

Lady Jane. You will be so good as to explain all to my sister.

Mil. (*Aside.*) Both upon me at once.—I have explained, madam, and all further talk about it is unnecessary.

Lady Bell. Only to satisfy her curiosity.

Lady Jane. To shew my sister her mistake.

Mil. (*To Lady Jane.*) I have made every thing clear, ma'am.—(*To Lady Bell.*)—Have not I, Lady Bell ? And—(*Turns to Lady Jane.*)—every thing now is upon a proper footing.

Lady Jane. Very well ; only give her to understand—

Mil. Your understanding is admirable—(*Turns*

to *Lady Bell*.)—I told you she would talk in this style.—(*Turns to Lady Jane*.)—You are perfectly right, and nobody understands things better.—(*Turns to Lady Bell*.)—Nobody whatever.

(*Looks and laughs at both by turns*.)

Lady Bell. But give me leave, you must speak out, sir.

Mil. (*Aside to Lady Bell*.) Never argue about it, it is not worth your while.

Lady Jane. There is some mystery in all this.

Mil. No; all very clear:—(*To Lady Jane*.)—drop it for the present.

Lady Bell. But I desire no doubt may remain.

Lady Jane. And I don't like to be kept in suspense. (*Both pulling him by the arm*.)

Mil. Distraction! I am like a lawyer, that has taken fees on both sides. You do me honour, ladies; but upon my soul, I can't help laughing. It will divert us some day or other, this will. Oh, ho, ho! I shall die with laughing. (*Breaks from them*.)

Enter MRS. BROMLEY, L.H. and SIR JOHN, R.H.

Mrs. B. What is all this uproar for?

Mil. Another witness of my folly!

(*Runs to the other side*.)

Enter DASHWOULD, M.D.

Dash. Millamour, I give you joy. Mr. Copyhold, your attorney, is come with the deeds. What's the matter?

Mil. The strangest adventure! I can't stay now. The ladies have been very pleasant. You love humour, and they have an infinite deal. I'll come to you in a moment. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Sir John. George, don't run away, let us finish the business.

Dash. If he says he'll marry, you may depend upon him. A poet determined to write no more, or a gamester forswearing play, is not sure to keep his word. I wish I may die, if I don't think him as much to be relied upon as a prime minister.

Lady Bell. Aunt, would you believe it? The demure Lady Jane—(*Bursts into a laugh.*)—She has taken such a fancy into her head! Milla-mour she thinks is up to the eyes in love with her.

Mrs. B. Ha, ha, ha! poor Lady Jane!

Lady Jane. And my sister's pride is hurt. She carries it with an air, as if she had made a complete conquest.

Mrs. B. How ridiculous the girls are! your son has opened his mind to you, Sir John?

Sir John. He has, and I approve of his choice. I hope it is as agreeable to you as to his father.

Mrs. B. I don't know how to refuse my consent.

Enter BYGROVE, L.H.U.E.

Byg. (Listening.) What does all this mean?

Dash. As I could wish. There he is.

(*Seeing Bygrove.*)

Mrs. B. Since it has your approbation, Sir John, I believe I must yield my consent. I never thought to marry again, but since you will have it so—

Sir John. Lady Bell, I understand, is willing to do me the honour of being my daughter-in-law.

Lady Bell. Oh! ho, ho, ho! this makes amends for all. My dear aunt Bromley, are you imposed upon? Did you listen to the traitor's vows?—The dear, perfidious?— (*Laughs violently.*)

Dash. He will soon be settled, Sir John, since there are now three rival goddesses contending for him. Mr. Bygrove, you are come in good time.

Byg. What fool's part are you to play now?

(*Coming forward.*)

Mrs. B. Sir John, I desire I may not be made your sport. Have not I here, under his hand, a declaration of his mind; here, in this copy of verses, given to me by himself, an earnest of his affection?

Lady Bell. Verses, aunt?

Lady Jane. Verses to you?

Mrs. B. Verses to me: only hear, Sir John.

(*Reads.*)

"I look'd, and I sigh'd, and I wish'd I could speak,
And fain would have paid adoration."

Lady Bell. Stay, stay; mine begin the same way.

(*Takes out a paper.*)

Lady Jane. The very words of mine.

(*Takes out a paper.*)

Mrs. B. Will those girls have done? (*Reads.*)

"But when I endeavour'd the matter to break,"

Lady Bell. (Reads.) "Still then I said least of my passion."

Mrs. B. Will you be quiet? (Reads.)

"Still then I said least of my passion ;

I swore to myself"—

Lady Bell. (Reads fast.) "And resolv'd I would try"—

Mrs. B. and Lady Bell. (Reading together.)

"Some way my poor heart to recover."

Lady Jane, Lady Bell, and Mrs. B. (Reading eagerly together.) "But that was all vain, for I sooner could die,

Than live with forbearing to love her."

Lady Bell. Oh, ho, ho, ho ! "Mr. Dashwould, what a piece of work has he made !

Dash. And the verses copied from Congreve.

Lady Bell. Copied from Congreve !

(Laughs heartily.)

Sir John. I never was so covered with confusion !

[Exit, M.D.]

Lady Bell. I never was so diverted in all my days.

Dash. He has acted with great propriety upon the occasion.

Mrs. B. He has made himself very ridiculous. He has exposed nobody but himself. Contempt is the only passion he can excite. A crazy, mad, absurd—

(Tearing the paper.)

Lady Jane, An inconstant, wild, irresolute—

(Tears the paper.)

Lady Bell. Ha, ha, ha ! so whimsical a character.

[Kisses the paper, and exit, R.H.]

Dash. (To *Bygrove*.) What shall I give you for your chance? [Exit, R.H.]

Byg. More than I'll give you for your wit. [Exit, R.H.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.--*An Apartment at Mrs. Bromley's.*

Enter DASHWOULD and SIR HARRY, M.D.

Dash. This way, Sir Harry. While they are all engaged in the pleasures of the table, I want a word with you in private. Did you mark Miss Neville, at dinner.

Sir Har. You know I did. And when Mrs. Bromley railed at her——

Dash. She railed at her with a littleness of spirit, that disgraced wealth and influence, and gave to poverty the superior character. Were I at the head of such a fortune as yours, to choose a wife, she should be the object of my affection. You like her, that's clear.

Sir Har. But she does not like me, and that's as clear. Somebody has done me a prejudice there. She received this letter, and gave me it to read.

Dash. (Reads.) "To Miss Neville"—(Opens it.) Without a name.

Sir Har. A poison'd arrow in the dark.

Dash. (*Reads.*) "Anonymous letters are generally the effect of clandestine marriage; this comes from a friend. If your honour, your virtue, and your peace of mind are worth your care, avoid the acquaintance of Sir Harry. He is the deceiver of innocence, and means to add your name to the list of those whom his treachery has already ruined. Make use of this hint, and act accordingly." A pretty epistle—(*Pauses.*) Don't I know this hand? So, so! I understand it, I can trace this; say no more, Sir Harry: pursue Miss Neville the closer for this. Will you let such a fellow as Malvil rob you of a treasure?

Sir Har. You don't suspect him?

Dash. Leave it all to me. Assure Miss Neville that this shall be cleared up. Hush! we are interrupted: go and join the company.

Enter MALVIL, M.D.

Sir Har. Pshaw! plague! the company without you—

Dash. Very well; leave me now. [*Exit Sir H. M.D.*] What's the matter, Malvil?

Mal. It will be over presently: a sudden sensation; I can't bear to see others made unhappy. Mrs. Bromley is a very valuable woman, but at times rather violent.

Dash. And that's much to be lamented, is not it?

Mal. You may laugh at it, sir, but I think it a serious matter. I left poor Miss Neville in a flood of tears: and——here she comes.

Enter MISS NEVILLE, M.D.

Dash. Not rising from table so soon?

Miss N. Excuse me, sir, I had rather not stay.

Dash. Never mind Mrs. Bromley's humours; come, we will all take your part.

Miss N. I am not fit for company, sir.

Dash. I am sorry to lose you. (*Crosses to L.H.*) I'll leave you with my worthy friend: he will administer consolation. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Miss N. Was there ever such inhuman tyranny? Insulted before the whole company!

Mal. It hurts me to the quick. I could not have believed her capable of such violence.

Miss N. You saw that I gave her no provocation.

Mal. It pains me to see what I do.

Miss N. During the whole time of dinner, it was one continued invective against me.

Mal. Millamour's behaviour had disconcerted her. But that is no excuse. Goodness by fits, and generosity out of mere whim, can never constitute a valuable character. I am sorry to see you so afflicted.

Miss N. You are very good, sir.

Mal. No, I have no merit in it; the instincts of my nature leave me no choice. I have studied myself, and I find I am only good by instinct. I am strangely interested for you. I have thought much of your situation: our time is short; they will be all rising from table presently. Attend to what I say: since Mrs. Brom-

ley is so incessant in her tyranny, do as I already hinted to you. Withdraw from this house at once. Madam La Rouge has an apartment ready for you. You may there remain concealed. In the mean time, I shall be at work for you. I shall prevail upon Mrs. Bromley to keep her word, about the five thousand pounds. That added to what is in my power, will make a handsome settlement for you.

Miss N. You heard what she said to Sir Harry?

Mal. She wants to drive you to some act of despair; perhaps to give you up a sacrifice to Sir Harry's loose desires.

Miss N. Are you so clear about Sir Harry?

Mal. (Aside.) 'Sdeath! I see she loves him. Hereafter I will open a scene to astonish you. (*Pauses and looks at her.*) You can never be happy under this roof. Mrs. Bromley will make this quarrel up, I know she will. The whole of her virtue consists in repentance, but what kind of repentance? A specious promise to reform her conduct, and a certain return of the same vices.

Miss N. She has made me desperate. I can stay here no longer. I'll go back to the country: I shall there be at peace.

Mal. You will there be too much out of the way. When you are settled at Madame La Rouge's, the haughty Mrs. Bromley will see to what she has driven you, and for the sake of her character, will begin to relent. Sir Harry must not know where you are. He means your ruin, I am sorry to say it, but I can give you such convincing proof—

Enter MRS. BROMLEY, M.D.

Mrs. B. Do you go to your room, madam ; let me see you no more to-day.

Mal It was a mere unguarded word that fell from Miss Neville. (*Speaks to Mrs. Bromley aside.*) Millamour is ashamed of his conduct. He is under my influence still ; I shall mould him to your wishes.

Mrs. B. (*Aside to him.*) I am a fool to think any more about him. Go to him ; watch him all day ; you will not find me ungrateful. (*Loud.*) And pray tell those girls to come up stairs. [*Exit Malvil, M.D.*] Mighty well, madam ; you must sit next to Sir Harry : you have no pretensions, have you ? And you must vouch for Lady Bell too ? She does not love gaming ; that story is all calumny. Bespeak yourself a place in the stage coach ; you shall quit this house, I promise you.

Miss N. It will be the last time I shall receive those orders, madam. Your favours are so embittered, there is such a leaven of pride, even in your acts of bounty, that I cannot wish to be under any further obligations. If doing justice to Lady Bell, if avowing my sentiments, in the cause of so amiable a friend, can give you umbrage, I am not fit to remain in this house.

[*Exit, R.H.*

Mrs. B. O brave ! you shall travel. Give her a fortune !—No, let Lady Bell reward her. How ! —Millamour, as I live.

Enter MILLAMOUR, M.D.

Mil. Deliver me, fate ; she here :—madam—
I—I—I—you are not going to leave us, I hope.

Enter SIR JOHN, L.H.

Mrs. B. (Smiling at Millamour.) And how can you look me in the face ?

Mil. (Seeing Sir John.) I am glad you are come, sir, I wanted to—

Mrs. B. Perverse !—What brings Sir John ?
(*Aside.*)—I shall expect you above stairs, gentlemen. I must try once more to fix that irresolute, inconstant man. [Exit, R.H.

Sir John. What a day's work have you made here ?

Mil. Sir !

Sir John. Can you expect any good from all this ? Ever doing and undoing ! These proceedings are terrible to your father.

Mil. You know, sir, that to gratify you is the height of my ambition.

Sir John. For shame ! don't imagine that you can deceive me any longer. Are you to be for ever in suspense ? Always resolving, and yet never decided ? Never knowing your own mind for five minutes.

Mil. You seem exasperated, but I really don't see the cause.

Sir John. No ?—Can't you feel how absurd it is to be always beginning the world ? For ever

in doubt? Day after day embarking in new projects, nay, twenty different projects in one day, and often in an hour?

Mil. Spare my confusion: I feel my folly; I feel it all; and let my future conduct—

Sir John. George, can I take your word? I know you have been at the gaming table.

Mil. The gaming table!

Sir John. Say no more: I know it all: after the indulgence I have shewn you, I now see that my hopes are all to be disappointed. If you have a mind to atone for what is past, pursue one certain plan, and be somebody. The time now opens a new scene, and calls for other manners. Reform your conduct, and I shall be happy. But I am tired of this eternal levity: my patience is worn out. I shall stay no longer in this house, to be a witness of your absurdity.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Mil. I have made myself very ridiculous here. I can't shew my face any more in this family. I'll go back to the Temple, and not marry these ten years. The law leads to great things: a seat in parliament, a vote or two against your conscience, a silk gown, and a judge; that's the course of things. I'll pursue my ambition—Honest friend, (*Calls to a Servant.*) hist! honest friend, will you be so good as just to get me my hat?

Enter DASHWOULD, M.D.

Dash. (L.H.) No, I bar hats. What, going to

desert us? The sport is just beginning. Bygrove has been lecturing his son, and quarrelling with Malvil. The integrity of that honest gentleman is suspected at last. He was the worthiest man in the world this morning, as good a creature as ever was born, but now he has sold himself to the widow. Lady Bell has been lively upon the occasion; and Malvil, to support his spirits, has plied the Burgundy, till he looks the very picture of hypocrisy, with a ruddy complexion, and a sparkling eye.

Mil. You may divert yourself, sir; I have done with them all.

(Crosses to L.H.)

Dash. But I can't part with you: you shall join us; Malvil shall have no quarter: he will stick to his glass till his charity for his neighbour begins to stagger; then off drops the mask; he will have courage enough to rail at mankind, and his true character will come forth, like letters in lemon juice before the fire.

Mil. Pho! absurd! I am on the rack. Why did you force me to stay dinner? I have been so weak, so frivolous.

Dash. How so? Because you changed your mind? There is nothing more natural. Don't you see men doing the same thing every day? Down goes the old mansion; a new one rises; exotic trees smile on the landscape, and enjoy the northern air; and when the whole is finished, in less than a twelve-month, the auctioneer mounts his pulpit. "Pleasing contiguity"—"Beautiful, and picturesque scene"—"Delectably featured by Nature"—"Shall I say twenty

thousand?"—Down it goes to the highest bidder, who pays his money, and runs away the next morning with an opera singer to Italy.

Mil. (*Laughing.*) Why, yes, we see those things every day.

Dash. No doubt; men are fickle and inconstant.

Mil. Very true; it is the way through life; in the lowest rank, as well as the highest. You sha'n't see a journeyman weaver, but he has his disgust, like a lord, and changes his lodging, his house of call, his barber, and his field-preacher.

Dash. Certainly; and then there is a real charm in variety. Besides, what you did to-day, was a mere frolic.

Mil. Nothing more: and that fellow, Malvil, was the occasion of it. My heart never rightly warmed to that man. I shall never consult him again. Affairs were in a right train, if he had not interposed.

Dash. You shall have your revenge. I have a mine to spring, will blow him up—(*Laughs.*) His advice to-day has served to produce the widow's character.

Mil. Yes, it has given a display of her. (*Laughs.*) How could she think me in earnest? Marry her! I would go into the army sooner.

Dash. A good pretty trade, the army, if you are killed in battle, it is your affair; if you conquer, you may retire, and live very prettily upon half pay.

Mil. Very true: the law is a more certain road.

Dash. A good agreeable life the law is: for

ever entangled in the cobwebs of Westminster hall; and you help to spin them yourself into the bargain.

Mil. And at the end of twenty years you are thought a good promising young man.

Dash. In the mean time, you are constantly hiring out your lungs, and ever in a passion about other people's affairs.

Enter LADY BELL, and LADY JANE, M.D.

Lady Bell. Come, sister, leave the men to themselves. Mr. Dashwould, has their wit frightened you away?

Mil. (*Looking at her.*) "Look in her face and you forget them all."

Dash. Won't your ladyship have compassion on that gentleman?

Lady Bell. Compassion!—my sister and I, we hope for his protection?

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE, M.D.

Capt. B. When you go away from company, Lady Bell, you draw every body in your train.

Lady Bell. Oh! you have so overpowered me with civil, and tender things!

Mil. (*Aside.*) What does he follow her for?

Lady Bell. A P'honneur, gentlemen. (*Goes up to Millamour.*) Uncle! Uncle Millamour, when you are married to my aunt, I hope you will be kind to us both. (*Curtsies.*)

Mil. (*Turning away.*) Confusion! daggers! daggers!

Lady Jane. (*Curtsy.*) May I salute you, uncle?

Mil. Pho! this foolery! (*Walks away.*)

Lady Bell. Let us give him all his titles!—
Brother, when you marry my sister.

(*Makes a low curtsy.*)

Mil. How can you, *Lady Bell*?

Lady Jane. Uncle!—Brother! }

Lady Bell. And Brother Uncle! } (*Both laugh.*)

Mil. (*Breaking away from them.*) This is too much—No patience can endure it. (*Turns to Lady Bell.*) Madam, this usage—(*Lady Bell and Lady Jane both laugh loud.*)

Lady Jane. Come, sister, let us leave him.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Lady Bell. Oh! ho! ho! I shall expire. (*Going.*)

Mil. Why will you torment me thus? (*Takes her by the hand.*) Am I to be for ever made your sport?

Lady Bell. Oh you would not have me laugh. To be sure, when one considers, it is a serious matter. And though Captain Bygrove (*Pointing to him.*) has orders to be in love with me; and though he has declared himself in the warmest terms—

Mil. And could you listen to him?

Lady Bell. And yet after all your promises, when you had touched my heart—

(*In a softened tone.*)

Mil. Jealous of me by this light. (*Aside.*)

Lady Bell. After all your faithless vows, to break them as you have done, like a Turk, or a Jew, or a Mahometan, (*Crying,*) and leave me like Dido and Æneas, it is enough to break a

young girl's heart—(*Crying bitterly.*) so it is, it is—There, will that please you? (*Bursts into a laugh.*) Adieu, uncle! my compliments to my aunt—

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Mil. Damnation!

Enter SIR HARRY, M.D.

Sir Har. Did not I hear somebody crying?

Mil. Yes, and laughing too. Captain Bygrove, you said something to Lady Bell, what was it, sir?

Capt. B. What I desire the world to know; I love her, I adore her. My father has ordered it, Mrs. Bromley approves: Lady Bell encourages me; and I shall be the happiest of mankind.

Mil. You and I must talk apart, sir. You know my prior claim. Attempt my life rather than my love. You must think no more of her, sir: she is mine by every tie, and so I shall tell her this moment.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Dash. Now hold that resolution, if you can.

Capt B. I have managed it well.

Dash. Admirably!

Sir H. What does all this mean? Dash would, you are wanted in the next room. Malvil is in for it: he sits toasting Miss Neville, while every idea fades away from his countenance, all going out one by one, and his eye sinks into all the dim vacuity of a brisk no meaning at all.

Dash. I'll look in upon them.—Bygrove, I see Miss Neville: let us give Sir Harry his opportunity.

Enter MISS NEVILLE, R.H.

Miss N. I thought Lady Bell was here ; I beg your pardon, gentlemen.

Dash. Your company is always agreeable, is not it, Sir Harry ? The gentleman will speak for himself. Come, Bygrove, I have occasion for you. [*Exit with Capt. Bygrove, M.D.*

Sir H. May I now presume, madam—

Miss N. You choose your time but ill, Sir Harry. I have so many things to distract me, I cannot listen to you now.

Sir H. (*Takes her hand.*) But you promised to hear me ; I have long beheld your sufferings.

Miss N. They do not warrant improper liberties. I can be humble as becomes my situation. I hope you will not oblige me to shew that spirit, which virtue is as much intitled to, as the proudest fortune in the kingdom.

Sir H. I mean you no disrespect. That letter is a black artifice to traduce my character.

Miss N. Your character, I dare say, sir, will come out clear and unsullied. You will permit me to take care of mine. It is all I have to value. I shall not continue any longer in this house. Mrs. Bromley has made it impossible ; I wish you all happiness, sir. [*Exit, L.H.*

Sir H. I wonder what Dashwould will say to all this. I shall like to hear him : He will turn it to a joke, I warrant him. No end of his pleasantries. [*Exit, R.H.*

*Enter MALVIL, in liquor, M.D. BYGROVE and DASH-
WOULD R.H.*

Mal. Very well ; make the most of it. Since you force me to speak, I say her character is a vile one.

Byg. Here is a fellow whom wine only inspires with malice.

Dash. Pho ! malice ! Malvil has no harm in him.

Mal. You may talk of Mrs. Bromley, but she is as vile a character, as pride, and insolence, and avarice, and vanity, and fashionable airs, and decayed beauty can jumble together.

Byg. Here's a return for her hospitality !

Mal. Marry her, I say ; marry her, and try.

Byg. You shall not have a shilling with Miss Neville.

Mal. There, the secret's out : you want to marry her, and make her break her word. Mankind's a villain ! a medley of false friends, eloping wives, stockjobbers, and usurers ; wits that wont write, and fools that will. *(Sings.)*

Byg. Dashwould, you are a panegyrist, compared to this man.

Dash. Yes, he takes your trade out of your hands.

Mal. She is Mrs. Bromley, the widow, and you are Mr. Bygrove, the widower ; and so, bite the biter, that's all.

Byg. His wit soars above you, Mr Dashwould.

Mal. Wit is a bad trade. Letters have no friends left in these degenerate times. Show a man of letters to the first of your nobility, and they will leave him to starve in a garret. In-

introduce a fellow, who can sing a catch, write a dull political pamphlet, or remarks upon a Dutch memorial, or play off fire works, and he shall pass six months in the country, by invitation. Mæcenas died two thousand years ago, and you are not historian enough to know it.

Dash. He makes a bankrupt of me.

Byg. I have found him out : I know him now : a pretended friend, that he may more surely betray you. Go, and get some coffee to settle your head. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Mal. Mrs. Bromley will settle your head.

Dash. Let us take him up stairs ; he'll tumble over the tea-table, to shew his politeness. (*Taking him by the arm.*) Come, the ladies wait for us.

Mal. Mankind, I say, is a villain ! (*Sings.*)

Enter LADY BELL.

Lady Bell. Bless me, Mr. Malvil !

Mal. All Dashwould's doing to expose a body. Do you look to Millamour, that's what I say to you.

Dash. He shan't stay to plague your ladyship. —Come, Malvil, let us go and be tender of reputation above stairs.

Mal. I'm alway's tender, and you are scurrilous. (*Sings and exit, led by Dashwould, R.H.*)

Lady Bell. How Millamour follows me up and down ! charming ! here he comes.

Enter MILLAMOUR, R.H.

Mil. Lady Bell, allow me but one serious moment.

Lady Bell. This bracelet is always coming off.
(*Fiddles with it.*)

Mil. Whatever appearances may have been, I burn with as true a passion, as ever penetrated a faithful heart.

Lady Bell. (*Aside and smiling.*) I know he is mine—This silly, obstinate bauble! What were you saying? Oh! making love again.

Mil. By this dear hand I swear—

(*Seizes her hand.*)

Lady Bell. Hold, hold, no violence. Give me my liberty, and thus I make use of it.

(*Runs away from him, R.H.*)

Enter CAPTAIN BYGROVE, R.H.

Lady Bell. (*meeting him.*) Oh! I have been wishing for you. How could you stay so long?

Capt B. They detained me against my will. But you see I am true to my appointment.

Mil. (*Aside to Bygrove*) Are you so? You shall keep an appointment with me.

Lady Bell. I was surrounded with darts and flames. That gentlemen was for renewing the old story, but it is so ridiculous!

(*Walks up the stage with Capt. Bygrove.*)

Mil. Distraction! to be insulted thus!

Lady B. (*As she walks up.*) You have prevailed upon me to be in earnest at last. Since your father has proposed it, and since you have declared yourself, why, if I must speak, get my aunt's consent, and mine follows of course.

Mil. (*Listening.*) If ever I forgive this.

Capt. B. Mrs. Bromley has consented. (*Then aside to Lady Bell.*) He has it; this will gall his pride.

Mil. No end of her folly. I was bent on marriage, but now it's all her own fault. And yet she knows my heart is fixed upon her.

Lady Bell. (*Walking down with Capt. Bygrove.*) You are so obliging, and I have so many things to say to you; but if people will not perceive, when they interrupt private conversation.

Mil. If ever I enter these doors again, may the scorn of the whole sex pursue me. [*Exit, L.H.*]

Capt. B. We have carried this too far.

Lady Bell. The barbarous man, when he should have taken no denial, but have lain on the ground, imploring, beseeching—Delightful! here he comes again. (*Goes to Captain Bygrove.*)

Enter MILLAMOUR, L.H.

Mil. (*Walking up to Lady Bell.*) Is it not strange, that you can't know your own mind for two minutes together?

Lady Bell. Ho! ho! the assurance of that reproach. (*Walks away.*)

Mil. (*To Bygrove.*) Appoint your time and place: I must have satisfaction for this.

Capt. B. To-morrow morning, when the marriage ceremony is over.

Mil. I shall expect you, sir. (*Going.*)

Enter LADY JANE, L.H.

Mil. This is lucky. I was in quest of your ladyship.

Lady Jane. In quest of me, sir?

Mil. In quest of you, ma'am. I have been waiting for an opportunity, and, if the sincerest sorrow can expiate past offences.—Here's a chair, ma'am.

Capt. B. (To Lady Bell.) We may drive him to extremities with Lady Jane: I'll leave you to recover your wanderer. [Exit R.H.]

Mil. (Sitting down.) If you will permit me to assure you—

Lady Jane. But while my sister is my rival—

Mil. Your sister's charms carry their own antidote with them. If there is faith in man, I mean to atone for what is past.

Lady Bell. (Coming forward.) So, so; with what pleasure she hears him! *(Aside.)* Did you speak to me, Mr. Millamour?

Mil. There was a time, ma'am!—*(Turns to Lady Jane.)*—Now she wants to interrupt us: don't let us mind her, and she'll withdraw.

Lady Bell. Wear the willow, Lady Bell! Not a word, sir; you are in the right: my spirits are too violent for you; and though what I say is not absolutely wit—do you like wit? I'm sure you ought, for it is undefineable, like yourself.

Mil. (Smiling.) That is not ill said.

Lady Bell. (Sits at a distance.) Horrid! I shall be vapoured up to my eyes. I'll try my song, to banish melancholy. Where is that foolish guitar? (Goes for it.)

Mil. Now her jealousy is at work. I knew she would be mortified. Let us agree to pique her pride, and probe her to the quick.

Lady Bell. Though I can't sing, it diverts a body to try.
(*Sits down and sings.*)

SONG.—LADY BELL.

*Sabrina, with that sober mien,
The converse sweet, the look serene :
Those eyes that beam the gentlest ray,
And though she loves, that sweet delay ;
Unconscious, seems each heart to take,
And conquers for her subject's sake !*

Mil. Vastly well ! (*Listens, smiles, looks at her, draws his chair near her, and beats time on her knee.*)

Lady Bell. (*Sings.*)
*The tyrant Cynthia wings the dart,
Coquetting with a bleeding heart ;
Has cruelty, which all adore,
Flights that torment, yet please the more :
Her lover strives to break his chain,
But can't, such pleasure's in the pain.*

Mil. Oh ! charming ! charming !
(*Kisses her hand.*)

Lady Bell. What are you about, you wretch ?
Only look, sister. I suppose, sir, when you have done, you will give me my hand again ?

Lady Jane. I promise you, sister, your triumph will be short.
[*Exit, L.H.*]

Lady Bell. How she flung out of the room !
(*Rises, and walks about.*)

Mil. You know, Lady Bell, that I am yours by conquest. I adore you still, and burn with a lover's faithful fires.

Lady Bell. Come, and have a dish of tea to cool you. Will you come?—(*Beckons him.*)—Won't you? Well, consider of it, and when you know your own mind, you may change it again.

[*Exit, R.H.*]

Mil. There now! Every thing by turns, and nothing long. Fickle do they call me? A man must be fickle, who pursues her through all the whimsies of her temper. Admire her in one shape, and she takes another in a moment.

*One charm display'd, another strikes our view,
In quick variety for ever new.* [*Exit, R.H.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Mrs. Bromley's House.*

Enter MILLAMOUR and DASHWOULD, R.H.

Mil. Am I to be sacrificed to your humour?

Dash. Am I to be sacrificed to your absurdity?

Mil. When pleasantry is out of all time and place—

Dash. Why then I shall be tired of all time and place.

Mil. Look ye, Mr. Dashwould, it is time to be serious. The wit that wounds the breast of a friend, is the pest of society.

Dash. What does all this mean, sir? What is it about?

Mil. If I lost money at play, was it for you to carry the tale to my father? for you to subject me to his reproaches?

Dash. I don't know by what fatality it happens, but that generally comes last, which ought to be mentioned first. I repeated nothing to Sir John: who did? Do you ask that question? Malvil, sir, with his usual duplicity.

Mal. Malvil? He has this moment told me how pleasant you were upon the subject, and at my expense.

Dash. Yes, when he had revealed the whole, and with false tenderness lamented your folly.

Mil. 'Sdeath! I understand it now. I have been absurd here.

Dash. I don't dislike you for your absurdity: that serves to divert one: Malvil excites other feelings. You know the character he gave you of Lady Bell.

Mil. Yes, and all slander.

Dash. I left him but now, representing you to Lady Bell in the same colours—and here—*(Shews a letter.)*—Here I have him fast. An anonymous letter against Sir Harry, sent for his own purposes to Miss Neville. All his contrivance, dictated by himself, and written at an attorney's desk. You know old Copyhold?

Mil. Did he pen the letter?

Dash. One of his clerks was the scribe. The young man is now in the house, at my request, and ready to prove Malvil the author. Here he comes—things are not ripe as yet. Say nothing now.

Enter MALVIL, L.H.

Mil. Walk in; you come opportunely.

Mal. If I can be of any service—

Mil. To be of disservice, is your province; and when you have done the mischief, you can transfer the blame to others.

Mal. I have been rather off my guard to-day. I am not used to be overtaken in that manner: my head is not quite clear.

Mil. Then this business may sober you. What was your whisper to me about that gentleman?

Mal. That he treated with wanton pleasantry, what I thought a serious matter. I may mistake the means, but the end of my actions I can always answer for. Sir John might hear of the affair from another quarter, so to soften his resentment—

Mil. You took care to excite it.

Mal. I—I—I am apt to carry my heart at my tongue's end.

Dash. I knew his heart was not in the right place.

Mal. I did not address myself to you, sir.

Mil. I know you have the grimace of character, Mr. Malvil, armed at all points with plausible maxims. But which of your maxims can

justify the treachery of betraying the secret of a friend? Who does it, is a destroyer of all confidence; and when he attempts to varnish his conduct, with the specious name of friendship, the malignity strikes the deeper: artful, smiling malignity.

Mal. I deserve all this. Friendship in excess is a fault. There are bounds and limits even to virtue. It would be well if a man could always hit the exact point. There is however something voluptuous in meaning well.

Dash. Well expressed, Malvil! ha! ha! you are right.

Mil. No more of your musty sentences.

Mal. Morals are not capable of mathematical demonstration. And—now I recollect myself—it did not occur at first—it was Madame La Rouge told the affair to Sir John. This gentleman here—I suppose you will take his word—he says she hears every thing, tells every thing, and he calls her a walking newspaper: not that she means any harm. I only mean to say—

Dash. O! fie, don't be too severe upon her.

Mal. She said at the same time—you know her manner—she told Sir John, that you are in love with half a dozen, and will deceive them all, and Lady Bell into the bargain.

Mil. Distraction! she dare not say it. This is another of your subterfuges. You know, sir, how you traduced Lady Bell, and made that gentleman the author of your own malevolence. At any other time and place, my sword should read you a lecture of morality.

Mal. You are too warm : and since I see it is so, to avoid contention, I shall adjourn the debate. [Exit, L.H.]

Mil. Deceive Lady Bell !—Whoever has dared to say it?—Madame La Rouge lives but a little way off. I'll bring her this moment, to confront this arch impostor. (Going L.H.)

Dash. You'll be sure to return.

Mil. This very night shall unmask him.

[Exit, L.H.]

Dash. I shall depend upon you. Malvil shall answer to Sir Harry : all his artifices shall be fairly laid open.

Enter BYGROVE, R.H.

Byg. Mr. Dashwould, we are now good friends. I have reposed a confidence in you. You know every thing between me and Mrs. Bromley, but you see how she goes on.

Dash. And I see how you go on. You are the dupe of your own policy.

Byg. How so.

Dash. The widow's schemes are seconded by your own imprudence. Can't you see, that if Millamour were once married out of your way, Mrs. Bromley would then be at her last stake, and you might have some chance ? And yet your son has it in command to defeat my friend Millamour with Lady Bell.

Byg. How ! light breaks in upon me. Gull that I was ! my son shall marry Lady Jane directly.

Dash. To be sure ; and the consequence is, that Lady Bell declares for Millamour.

Byg. Right : I am for ever obliged to you ; I'll go and speak to my son this moment ; Lady Jane shall be his, without delay. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Dash. So much for my friend, the Captain : I have settled his business.

Enter MRS. BROMLEY, L.H.

Mrs. B. Mr. Dashwould, I am so distracted—a terrible business has happened.

Dash. What's the matter ?

Mrs. B. Miss Neville ! I can't think what is become of her—she is not to be found, high or low. We have searched every where for her. What can be the meaning of this ?

Dash. Is Malvil gone ?

Mrs. B. This very moment : he has no hand in it. He sees, and pities my distress. He is gone to make inquiry. A girl that I was fond of, and never said an angry word to.

Dash. You have been remarkably mild.

Mrs. B. You know how tender I have been of her.—What can have put this into her head ? How long has Millamour been gone ?—I understand it now. This is his exploit.

Dash. You wrong him. I will undertake to discover this plot for you.

Enter BYGROVE, R.H.

You can comfort the lady, sir ; I shall return immediately. [*Exit, R.H.*]

Byg. (L.H.) May I take the liberty, madam—
Mrs. B. Why torment me thus? You are all
in a plot against me.

Enter LADY BELL, LADY JANE, and CAPTAIN
BYGROVE, L.H.

Mrs. B. There, Lady Bell, there is your lover
run away with your cousin.

Lady Bell. I can depend upon her. I can still
venture to answer for her honour.

Byg. She will come back, you need not alarm
yourself.

Mrs. B. You have seduced her, for any thing
I know. I am distracted by you all, and will
hear no more. [Exit, R.H.]

Byg. Mrs. Bromley, permit me to say a word.
[Exit, R.H.]

Lady Bell. I hope there is nothing amiss. I
can rely upon Miss Neville's discretion; I think
I can. Come, sister, let us go and inquire.—
(Going, looks back.)—Hey! you two are staying,
to say delicate things to each other.

Capt. B. Our difficulties, you know, are at an
end. I have my father's orders to follow my
own inclination. Had Millamour staid, I have
a plot would have fixed him your ladyship's for
ever.

Lady Jane. And we sha'n't see him again this
month, perhaps.

Lady Bell. Let him take his own way. I am
only uneasy about Miss Neville at present.

Enter DASHWOULD, R.H. with a letter in his hand.

Dash. This way, you are wanted: I have a letter here, that discovers all. [*Exit, R.H.*

Lady Bell. But what does it say? Let us go and hear it directly. [*Exeunt, R.H.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at Madame La Rouge's.*

Enter MILLAMOUR and LA ROUGE, L.H.

Mil. Have you sent to Dashwould?

La Rou. Yes, I have send him letter.

Mil. Miss Neville here, you say?

La Rou. She come an hour ago, all in tear.

Mil. Then she is safe.—You are sure you never said any thing to Sir John about the gaming business?—You did not say that I should deceive Lady Bell?

La Rou. Monsieur Malvil, he tell you so?

Mil. Yes; and I tremble for the consequence.

La Rou. It is, one great villain—I great respect for you. *Vous est aimable.* Monsieur Malvil, he is great fripon. And I ver sorry he be marry to Mademoiselle Neville.

Mil. Married to her?

La Rou. You not know it?—He is marry to her dis day.—He take my apartment tree week ago. He not have it known dat he is marry for five or six day; write letter to me dis afternoon: he must be let in ver private;

de servant not to see him ; go up de back stairs to her room, and so *l'affaire est faite*.

Mil. And thus he has seduced her from her relations ? Let me see the letter.

(*Reads the letter.*)

Madame la Rouge,

Miss Neville has this day given me her hand in marriage. I would not have it known for some time. Conduct me to her apartments, unknown to your servants. The way up the back stairs will be best. Your secrecy shall be rewarded by

Martin Malvil.

La Rou. I not tink him so bad to talk of me, and tell such parcel of story, vid not one word of true.

Mil. So ; here he is in black and white. To come privately, is he ? If I could detain him here, and prevent all means of his escaping—

La Rou. Escape ? Up back stairs, he must come through dat apartment ;—(*Pointing to a door in the back scene.*)—I turn de key in de back door : *viola votre prisonier* ; he is prisoner.

Mil. Exquisite woman ! I'll lock this door, and secure the key.—(*Locks the door in the back scene.*)—Hush ! (*A rap at the street door, L.H.*)

La Rou. *Le voila* : he come now.

Mil. Fly, let him in ; send once more to Dashwould ; I want him this instant ; fly, dispatch.

La Rou. I do all vat you bid me. [*Exit, L.H.D.*]

Mil. It is honest of her to make this discovery. If this be Malvil—a soft whisper that—(*Listens.*)—it is he, I hear his voice—I shall have the merit of defeating villainy, and pro-

tecting innocence.—Don't I hear Miss Neville?
—(*Goes to R.H.D.*)—Miss Neville!

Enter MISS NEVILLE, R.H.D.

Miss N. Madam La Rouge!—Oh, sir! what brings you hither?

Mil. It is your interest to hear me; your happiness depends upon it.

Miss N. Alas! I fear he is too rash.

Mil. Command your attention, and listen to me: Malvil has planned your ruin.

Miss N. Impossible! he has too much honour: why will you alarm me thus? I am unfortunate, and you, sir, need not add to my afflictions.

Mil. You have trusted yourself to a villain: he means, at midnight, to gain access to your person, to triumph over your honour, and then leave you to remorse, to shame, and misery. Read that letter.—(*Gives it her, and she reads it to herself.*)—She's an amiable girl, and I dare say, will make an admirable wife.—Hark! I hear him in yonder room. Suppress each wild emotion of surprise, and wait the event.

Miss N. I can scarce believe what I read. What have I done? (*Weeps.*)

Mil. I will direct you; rely upon me.

Enter DASHWOULD, LADY BELL, and LADY JANE,
L.H.D.

Dash. La Rouge has told us the whole story.

Mil. Hush ! no noise.

Lady Bell. My sweet girl, how could you frighten me so ?

Miss N. I blush for what I have done : but Mrs. Bromley's cruelty drove me to despair.

Lady Jane. My dear, all will be well : don't flurry yourself.

Lady Bell. Though my aunt vexed you, why run away from me ?

*Enter MRS. BROMLEY, BYGROVE, SIR HARRY, and
CAPTAIN BYGROVE, L.H.D.*

Mrs. B. Where is this unhappy girl ?

Mil. A moment's patience.

Enter MADAME LA ROUGE, L.H.D.

Mil. Is he safe ?

La Rou. He is dere in de room as safe as in Bastile.

Mil. Speak to him through the door : now all be silent,

La Rou. Monsieur Malvil, open de door.

Mal. (Within, M.D.) Do you open it, you have the key.

La Rou. De key, it is dere : Miss Neville, it is gone to bed ; all de house asleep : I in de dark ; now is your time.

Mil. (To La Rouge.) Hush ! here is the key.
(Takes away the lights.)

Mal. (Within.) Will you dispatch ?

La Rou. Attendez : here is de key : I let you out.
(Unlocks the door.)

Enter MALVIL, M.D.

Mal. All in darkness : is she gone to bed.

La Rou. (*Leading him.*) She wait for you : vere was you married ?

Mal. St. James's parish : Sir Harry has not succeeded ; she prefers me. Say nothing of it yet awhile.

La Rou. No ; not a vord : tenez, I get light for you. [*Exit, L.H.D.*]

Mal. So ; I have carried my point. The family will be glad to patch up the affair, to avoid the disgrace.

Enter MADAME LA ROUGE, L.H.D. with Lights.

La Rou. Ah ! you look *en cavalier* ; ver good apartment for you ; and dere is good picture. And dis room is well furnish : look about you : more picture, and all original.

(*Turns him to the company.*)

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha ! your servant, Mr. Malvil !

Mal. Hell and confusion !

Mil. (*Taking him by the arm.*) There are bounds and limits even to virtue.

Dash. (*At his other arm.*) Morals are capable of mathematical demonstration.

Lady Bell. (*To Miss Neville.*) Let us withdraw from all this bustle. Sir Harry, step this way. I want you.—

[*Exit with Miss Nev. Lady Jane, and Sir H. L.H.*]

Dash. This is all according to the fitness of things.

Mil. Something voluptuous in meaning well.

Byg. Dashwould, your ridicule is now in season to expose such a character. He is fair game, and hunt him down as you please.

Mal. The fiends are about me!—Mr. Bygrove, you are a thinking man, I appeal to you.

Mil. I appeal to this letter, sir.

Omnes. Ha, ha, ha!

Mal. The letter is forged—let me see it.

(*Snatches at it.*)

Dash. And I have another proof! this anonymous scrawl, written by your direction, and sent to Miss Neville, to give a stab to the character of Sir Harry. Do you deny it, sir? Your secretary is now in the house; I brought him with me; he is ready to prove you the author of this mean, clandestine mischief.

Mal. All false; all a forgery. Where is this French impostor? Where is your witness, sir? —(*To Dash.*)—I'll put them both to the proof this moment.

[*Exit, L.H.*]

Dash. No private parlying.

[*Exit,*]

Byg. No; we must all hear.

[*Exit,*]

L.H.

Mrs. B. Yes; all must hear.

[*Exit,*]

Mil. My presence may be necessary.

(*Going, L.H.*)

Capt. B. Millamour, stay and give me joy.

Mil. Of what?

Capt. B. The idol of my heart! To-morrow makes her mine.

Mil. Well, I give you joy. Who is she?

Capt. B. My Lady Bell, thou dear fellow: come, let us go and see what they are about.

Mil. Let us go and see who shall cut the other's throat.

Capt. B. A pleasant employment.

Mil. You shall tear this heart out, before you tear Lady Bell from me.

Capt. B. Very well; have your frolic.—This works as I could wish. (*Aside.*)

[*Crosses and exit L.H.D.*]

Mil. Despair and frenzy! if she is capable of a treachery like this—

Enter LADY BELL, L.H.D.

Lady Bell. You have done some good at last, Mr. Millamour.

Mil. Lady Bell!—(*Pauses, and looks at her.*)—I once thought—but you will break my heart.

Lady Bell. It will bend a little, but never break.

Mil. Will you listen to me? There is a tyrant fair, and you have interest with her; you can serve me; all the joys of life are centered there.

Lady Bell. (*Smiles aside.*) He is mine against the world. And so you want my interest? That's lucky, for I have a favour to request of you.

Mil. Is there a favour in the power of man, you may not command at my hands?

Lady Bell. You are very good, sir; there is a person, but the levity of his temper—

Mil. (*Aside.*) She means me.—Your beauty will reclaim him.

Lady Bell. (*Smiles at him.*) May I rely upon you?

Mil. What an angel look there was!—(*Aside.*)—and do you ask the question?

Lady Bell. When sincere affection—

Mil. It is generous to own it.

Lady Bell. And since the impression made by—

Mil. Do not hesitate.

Lady Bell. Made by Captain Bygrove—

Mil. Made by Captain Bygrove. (*Turns away.*)

Lady Bell. That wounds deep—(*Aside.*)—and if you will assist my fond, fond hopes—it will be generous indeed.

Mil. This is a blow I never looked for.—(*Aside.*)—Yes, ma'am, it will be generous—and in return, if you will intercede for me with Lady Bell—pho! with a—with Lady Jane, I say—I say if you will intercede for me with Lady Jane—

Lady Bell. Oh! by all means. And as I approve of your choice—(*He walks away, she follows him.*)—I hope you will approve of mine; and by mutual acts of friendship, we may promote each other's happiness.

Enter DASHWOULD, L.H.D.

Dash. Malvil is detected.

Lady Bell. And Sir Harry has settled every thing with Miss Neville. Go and wish him joy.—[*Exit Dash. L.H.D.*]
—My sweet friend will be happy at last. (*Going.*)

Mil. (*Taking her hand.*) But you won't marry the Captain?

Lady Bell. Will you make interest for me?

Mil. How can you torment me thus?

Lady Bell. You have done some service, and you may now entertain a degree of hope.—(*Smiling at him.*)—But have you another copy of verses for my aunt?

Mil. How can you?—(*Kisses her hand.*)—She yields, and I am blessed indeed.

Enter MISS NEVILLE, SIR HARRY LOVEWIT, LADY JANE, and CAPTAIN BYGROVE, L.H.

Lady Bell. Here, Sir Harry, in the presence of this company, I give you, in this friend of mine, truth, good sense and virtue. Take her, sir, and now you have got a treasure.

Sir H. (*To Miss Neville.*) It shall be my pride to raise you to that sphere of life, which your merit, and your sufferings from—

(*Looks at Mrs. Bromley.*)

Mrs. B. Why fix on me, sir?

Sir H. They are much mistaken, who can find no way of shewing their superior rank, but by letting their weight fall on those, whom fortune has placed beneath them.

Dash. And that sentiment, however I may rattle, I wish impressed upon all the patrons of poor relations, throughout his majesty's dominions.

Miss N. (*Crosses to Mrs. B.*) Mrs. Bromley, I have much to say to you. My obligations to

you I shall never forget. I am not ashamed, even in the presence of Sir Harry, to own the distress in which you found me. If at any time I have given offence; if under your displeasure, I have been impatient, you will allow for an education that raised me much above my circumstances. That education shall teach me to act as becomes Sir Harry's lady, with affection, with duty to him; and to you, madam, with gratitude, for that bounty which saved me from calamity and ruin.

Mrs. B. Your words overpower me. I feel that I have done wrong. I rejoice at your good fortune: your merit deserves it. (*She takes her hand—they retire a little up the stage.*)

Dash. Why this is as it should be.—*Mr. Bygrove*, I hope soon to wish you joy.

Byg. Compared to *Malvil*, thou art an honest fellow, and I thank you.

Dash. *Millamour*, is there no recompense for your virtue? in a modern comedy, you would be rewarded with a wife.

Mil. Lady Bell has more than poetical justice in her power. I wish Sir John were here: he would now see me reclaimed from every folly, by that lady.

Mrs. B. (*Advancing between Dashwoud and Bygrove.—Miss N. is now with Sir Harry.*) If it is so, I congratulate you both.

Lady Bell. It is even so, aunt: the whim of the present moment. *Mr. Millamour* has served my amiable friend, and I have promised him my hand—and so—(*Crosses to him and holding up*

both her hands.)—which will you have? Puzzle about it, and know your own mind if you can.

Mil. With rapture thus I snatch it to my heart.

Lady Bell. Sister, what nunnery will you go to? Mr. Bygrove, command your son to take her.

Capt. B. That command I have obeyed already.

Lady Jane. Since the truth must out; we made use of a stratagem to fix my sister and that gentleman.

Lady Bell. To fix yourself, if you please. I knew you would be married before me.

Mil. Dashwould, give me your hand. Your wit shall enliven our social hours, and while I laugh with you at the events of life, you shall see me endeavour to weed out of my own mind every folly.

Dash. You do me honour, sir; and if Mr. Bygrove will now and then give and take a joke—

Byg. As often as you please:—but take my advice, and don't lose your friend for your joke.

Dash. By no means, Mr. Bygrove—except now and then, when the friend is the worst of the two.

Mil. The varieties of life, till now, distracted my attention.

*But when our hearts victorious beauty draws,
We feel its pow'r, and own its sov'reign laws;
To that subservient all our passions move,
And even my constancy shall spring from love.*

Disposition of the Characters when the Curtain falls.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 155 387 2